



SECS

VOL.
4

DEATH OF THE FAMILY



Collecting Batman v2 13-17, Batgirl v4 13-16,
Catwoman v4 13-14, Suicide Squad v3 14-15,
Batman & Robin v2 15-16, Detective Comics v2 15-16,
Nightwing v3 15-16, Red Hood & the Outlaws 15-16,
Teen Titans v4 15-16

DEATH OF THE FAMILY

He murdered Jason Todd, paralyzed Barbara Gordon and created more mischief and mayhem than any other villain in the DC Universe.

And he did it all for a laugh.

The Joker is the Dark Knight's greatest foe and deadliest adversary, but after gruesomely removing his own face in the pages of Detective Comics v2 #1, he remained absent from Gotham City for the past year - biding his time and planning for his next big punchline.

Now, the Joker's back - and he's set his sights on the entire Bat-Family.

Thanks to those who made the original releases:

**Zone-Empire
Nahga-Empire
digital-Empire
digital-TheGroup
Megan-Empire**

JK-Empire

G85-Empire

Collection: Batman v2 13-17, Batgirl v4 13-16,
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VOL

4

INTERLUDE ONE.

NO ONE'S *MAKING* YOU COME HERE, BARBARA.

YEAH?

YOU'VE OBVIOUSLY NEVER TRIED TO WIN AN ARGUMENT WITH MY *FATHER*, DOCTOR.

DR. ANDREA LATEMENDI
CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST

YOU WERE *SHOT*. YOUR LIFE HAS CHANGED.

DON'T YOU THINK YOU COULD MAYBE USE A LITTLE *HELP* NEGOTIATING THAT, MS. GORDON?

IT'S ODD.

WHAT IS?

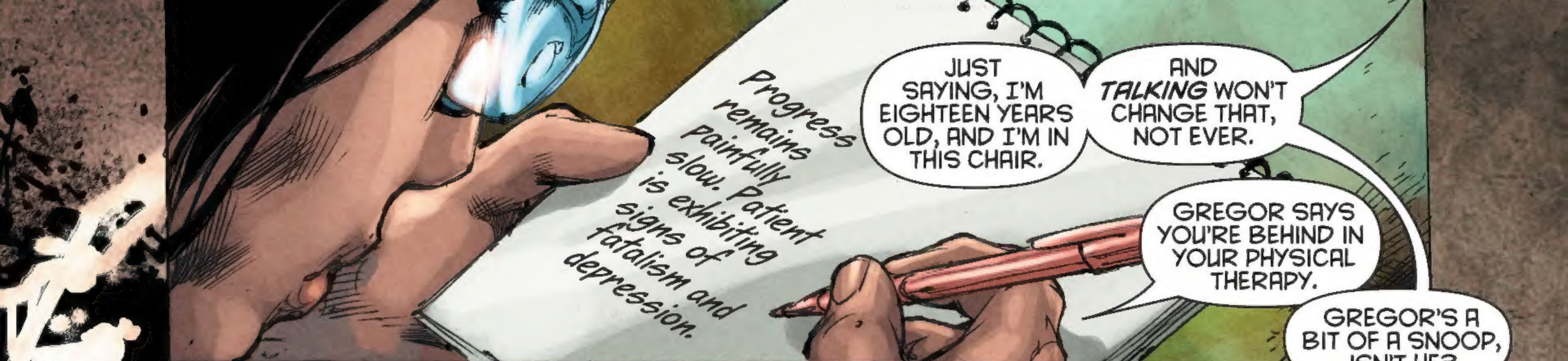
HOW YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO EVER WANTS TO TALK ABOUT THAT.

AND *YOU'RE* GETTING PAID.

IF YOU'RE TRYING TO HURT MY FEELINGS--

NO, NO.

JUST SAYING.



JUST SAYING, I'M EIGHTEEN YEARS OLD, AND I'M IN THIS CHAIR.

AND TALKING WON'T CHANGE THAT, NOT EVER.

GREGOR SAYS YOU'RE BEHIND IN YOUR PHYSICAL THERAPY.

GREGOR'S A BIT OF A SNOOP, ISN'T HE?

"I HAD DREAMS LAST NIGHT, VIVID ONES."

"GOOD ONES OR BAD ONES, BARBARA?"

"WHAT WAS THE NATURE OF THESE DREAMS?"

"IT'S THE SAME THING IN THE GOOD ONES **AND** THE BAD ONES, DOCTOR.

"I **KILL** THE JOKER WITH MY BARE HANDS. SOMETIMES I FEEL GUILTY.

"AND SOMETIMES I WAKE UP CRYING THAT IT WAS **ONLY** A DREAM."

BY THE WAY, I CAN READ YOUR WRITING FROM THE MOVEMENT OF YOUR PEN. YOU SHOULD TRY TYPING.

ANYTHING ELSE YOU'D CARE TO DISCUSS?



PRESENT DAY... JOKER'S CHURCH.

*I was reborn
in the fire of a
muzzle flash.*

*I wanted
to lead a
normal life.*

*So that's what I did.
I rolled the dice.*

*And I
lost.*

*As a seventeen-year-old girl,
I was shot and left to die by
the worst man who ever
walked the streets of this city.*

*There is no amount of pain
that will ever sate him. When
you think he's taken
everything you have?*

*He says something your
mind can't even process.*

⇒SNIFF!⇒



*He wants my hand
in marriage.*

When all I want to do is
choke the life out of his
scrawny white throat.



DEATH OF THE FAMILY
COLLISION-PART THREE
Ceremony

Gail Simone writer Ed Benes art pages 1-10
Daniel Sampere pencils pages 11-20 Vicente Cifuentes inks pages 11-20
Ulises Arreola colors Dave Sharpe letters Ed Benes & Ulises Arreola cover
Katie Kubert assistant editor Brian Cunningham editor Batman Created By Bob Kane



NO.
NOT REALLY.

OH, DEAR.
NOT THE "I'VE
GOT A HEADACHE"
EXCUSE
ALREADY?

Joker's got my mother sitting
on a chair over a five-pound nail
bomb back at the roller rink.

And God help me, I've got
her severed finger in a
plastic bag in my belt.

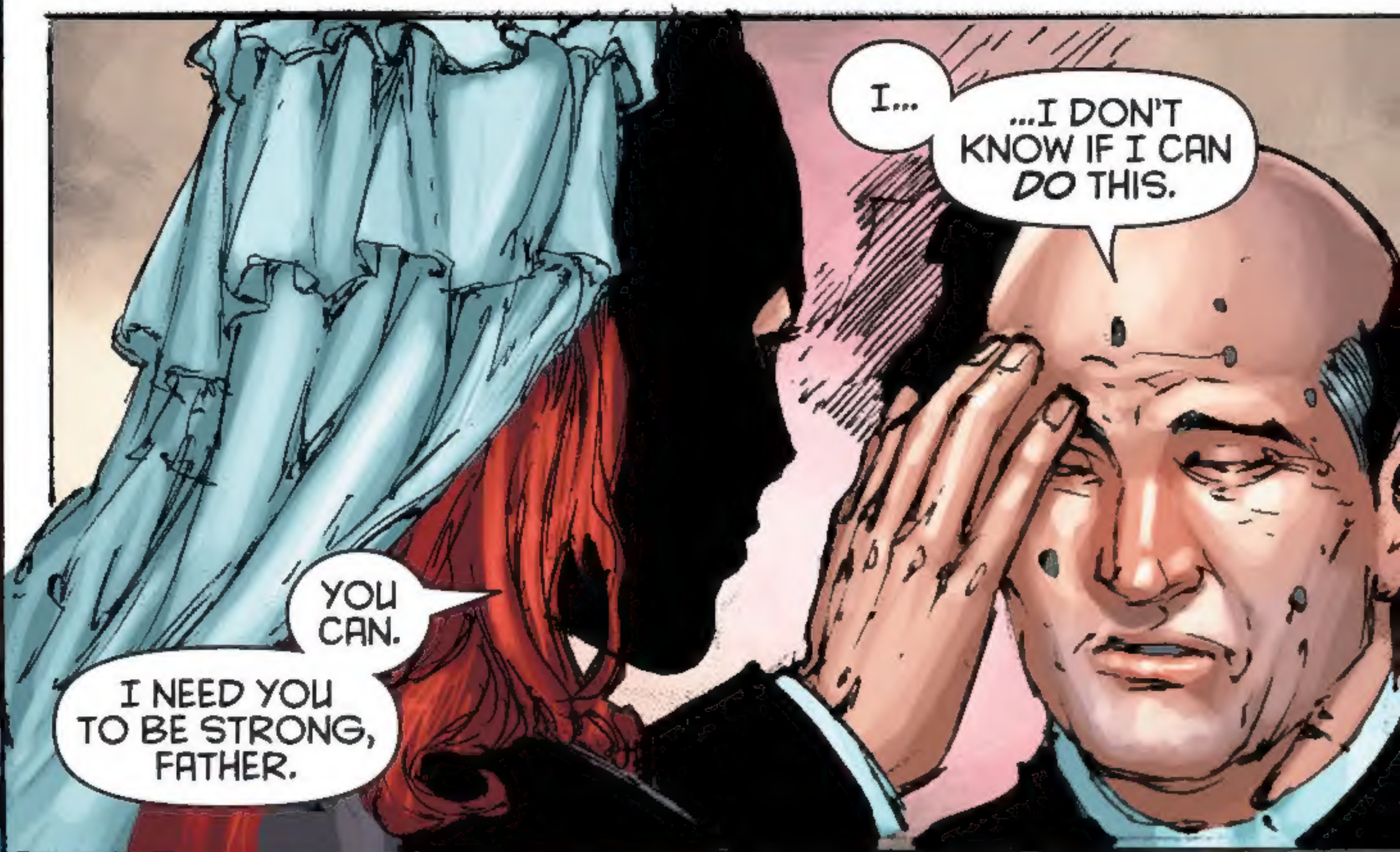


LET'S
GET THIS
FARCE
OVER
WITH.

OH,
DEAR.

A
MODERN
GIRL, ARE
WE?

USUALLY
I JUST
KILL THOSE
TO SAVE THE
TROUBLE
LATER.



I...

...I DON'T
KNOW IF I CAN
DO THIS.

YOU
CAN.

I NEED YOU
TO BE STRONG,
FATHER.



He has all
the cards.

But he has no
idea. No clue.

Of the absolute
hatred I have in
my heart right now.

ONE
QUESTION,
JOKER.

YES,
LAMB OF MY
LOINS?

WHY
THIS? WHY
ME?

WHY,
BECAUSE IT'S
IN MY BOOK,
BATGIRL!

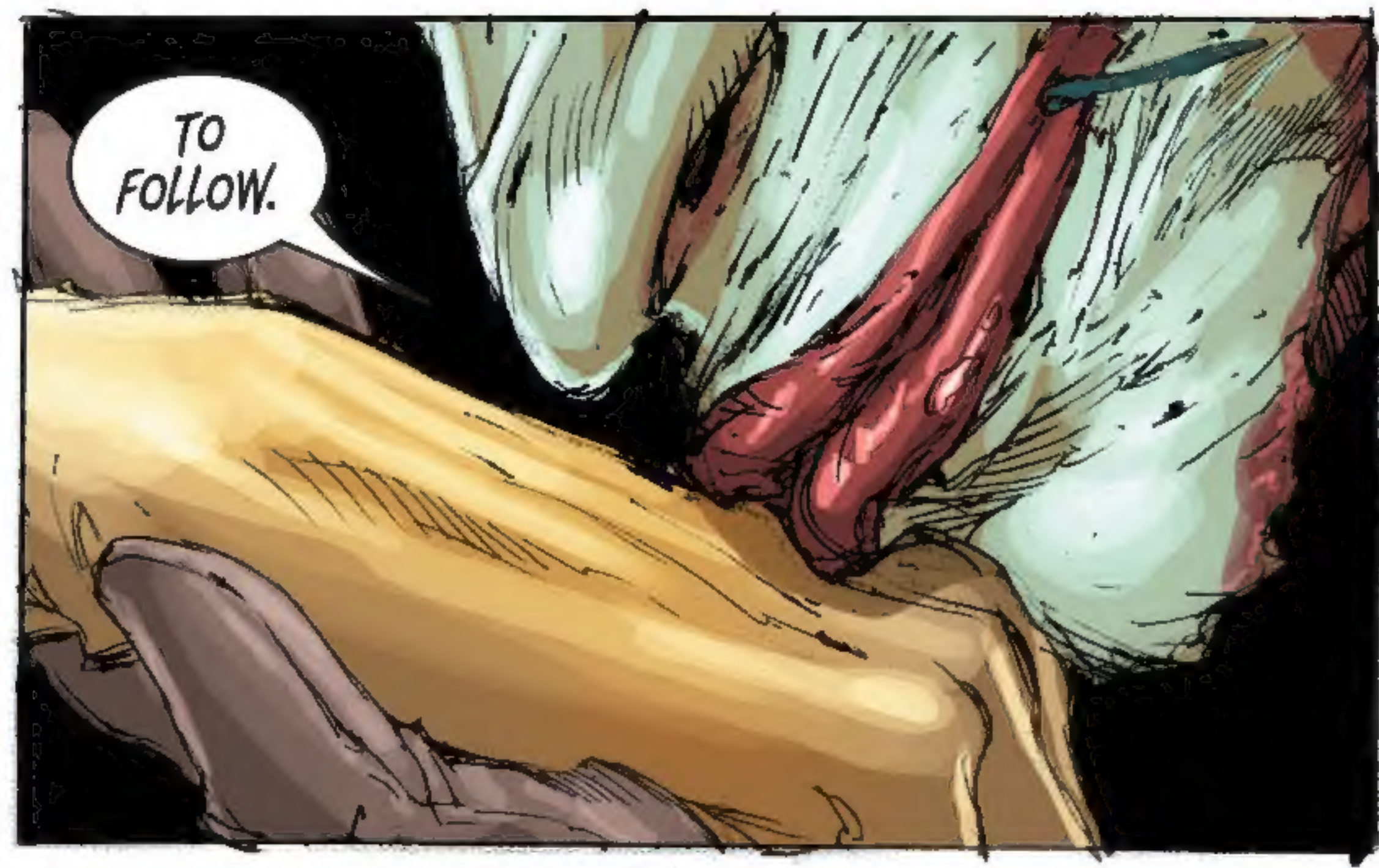
IT'S ALL IN RED
AND WHITE AND A
LITTLE BIT MORE
RED!



HEE HEE--I
WROTE THIS
LOVELY BOOK,
YOU SEE?

MORE OF
THE ULTIMATE
SELF-HELP BOOK,
REALLY.

FOR FUTURE
GENERATIONS, TO
UNDERSTAND.



TO
FOLLOW.



AND THIS. THIS
IS THE WAY MARRIAGES
OF STATE HAVE BEEN DONE
FOR CENTURIES.

ALL RIGHT, SO
MAYYYYYYBE THE BRIDE
DIDN'T ALWAYS LOVE
THE GROOM RIGHT AWAY.
A PIFFLE, I SAY.



BUT THE BAT.
SEE, HE'S THE KING,
AND I'M THE
JESTER.

DON'T
LAUGH, I'M GOING
SOMEWHERE WITH
THIS.

AND YOU.
AND THE
BRATSSS.

YOU'RE JUST
DRAGGING HIM
DOWN.



YOU A-OKEY,
THERE,
LEFTY?

=>SNFFF<=

I ALWAYS
CRY AT
WEDDINGS,
BOSS.

CHIN
UP, BIG
GUY.



AND SO THE THING, THE THING IS--THE THING TO DO IS...

...TAKE ALL THE PAWNS OFF THE BOARD, MY LITTLE BLACK AND GOLD! HA HA HA HA HA!



YOU CAN'T HONESTLY THINK THIS SHAM WEDDING MEANS ANYTHING, CAN YOU?

ON THE CONTRARY, DON'T YOU READ THE PAPERS? SHAM WEDDINGS ABOUND FOR A REASON, CUDDLEKINS.

BUT YOU MAKE A FAIR POINT.

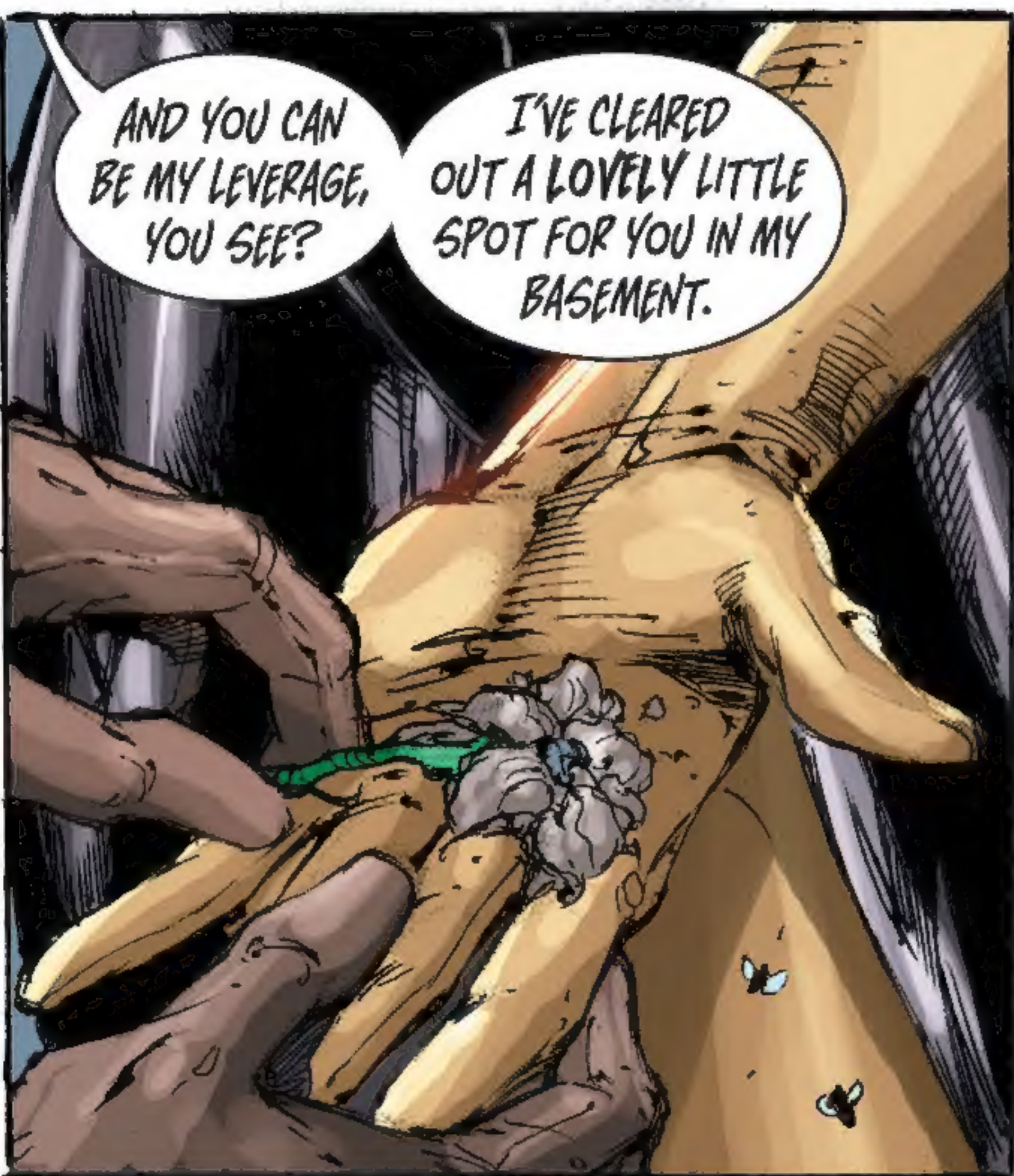
LEFTY, GRAB THE THING FOR ME, WON'T YOU?

MY PLAN, AND I'VE BEEN WORKING ON THIS FOR SIMPLY EVER...

...IS TO FREE MY DEAR FRIEND THE BAT.

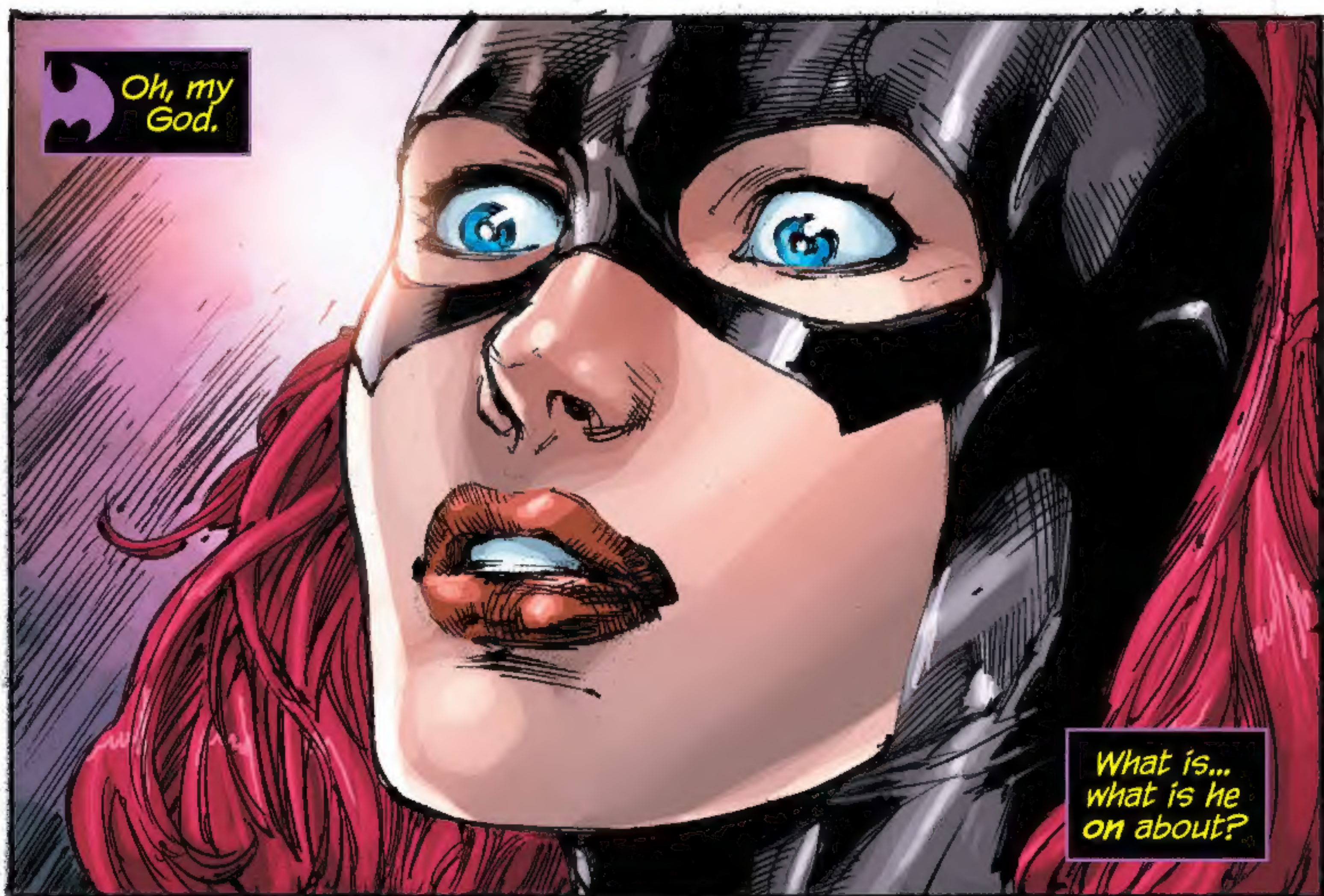
FROM PEOPLE LIKE YOU.

PARASITES. LEECHES. SPIN-OFFS.



AND YOU CAN BE MY LEVERAGE, YOU SEE?

I'VE CLEARED OUT A LOVELY LITTLE SPOT FOR YOU IN MY BASEMENT.



Oh, my God.

What is... what is he on about?



THANK YOU, LEFTY.

ANYHOW, SHE-BAT... YOU JUST MIGHT GET NAUGHTY AND TRY TO DO THE OLD MIDNIGHT DIVORCE ON ME, RIGHT?



SO I
DECIDED TO HELP
MYSELF TO YOUR
ARMS AND LEGS,
SWEETY-BOO.

CALL IT THE
BEST PRE-NUP
EVER.

RRRRRRRRRR

I...

...you make me
believe there is
a Satan, Joker.

Damn
you.



ENOUGH.

YOU LEAVE
THIS CHURCH.
LEAVE THIS GIRL
ALONE.

FATHER--

THANKS. I
HAVE THIS.



IT'S ALL
TERRIBLY SAFE.
LEFTY HERE'S A
DOCTOR.

I WAS A VET'S
ASSISTANT FOR
A SEMESTER.

CLOSE
ENOUGH.

RRRRRRRRRR

Okay.

Enough of
this thing.



I could run,
I'll get shot,
no question.

But I might
make it.

But my
mother
wouldn't.

That's
it.

Time to roll
the dice again.

Time to take
some of these
bastards down
with me.

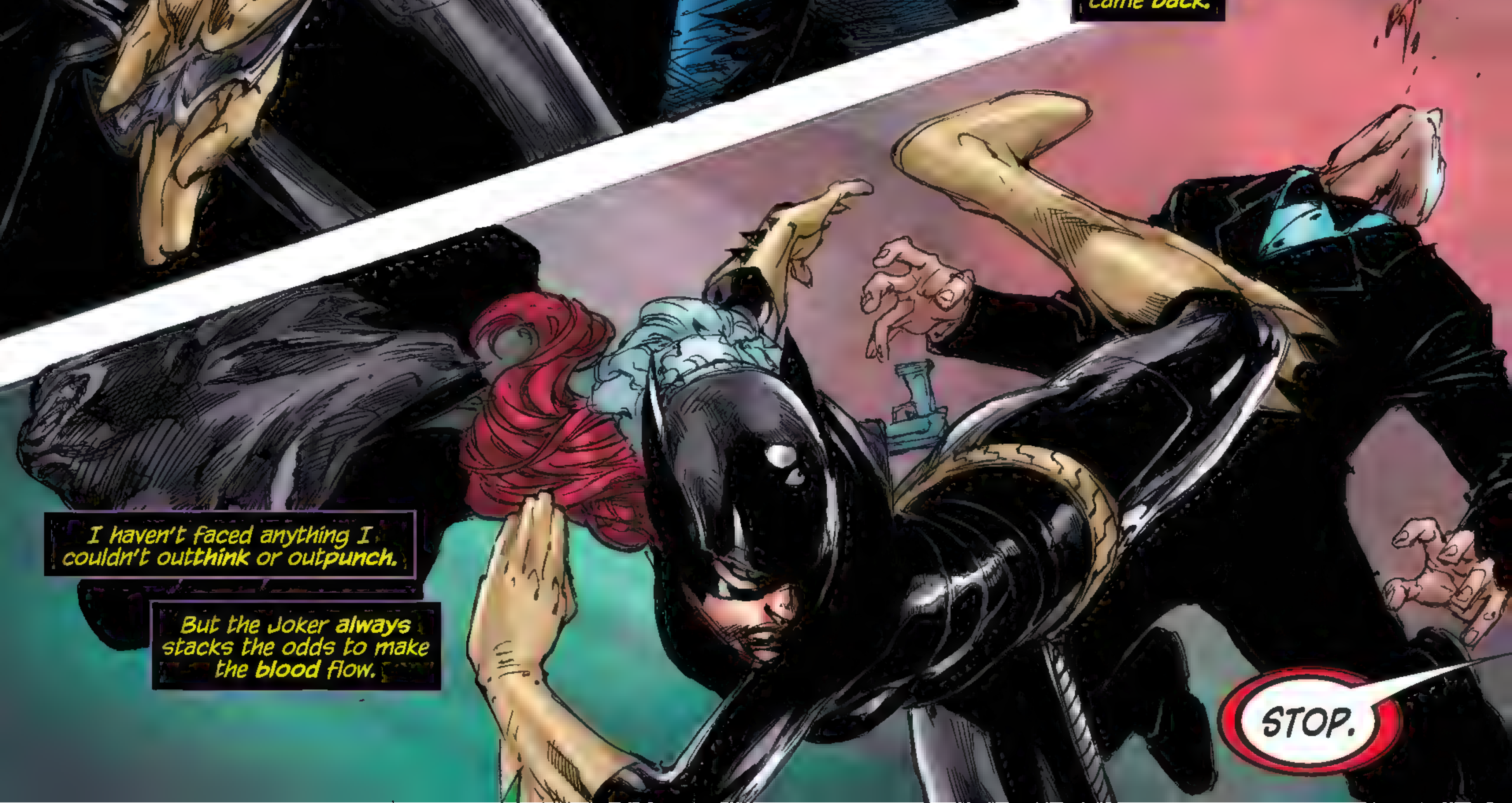


JOKER.

I'VE
DECIDED
TO BREAK
OFF OUR
ENGAGE-
MENT.

GLK!K!

Since I...
came back.



I haven't faced anything I
couldn't outthink or outpunch.

But the Joker always
stacks the odds to make
the blood flow.

STOP.



EXCUSE ME.

I DON'T MEAN TO INTERRUPT.



James...?

I'M SORRY, BUT THERE'S A STRICT R.S.V.P. POLICY.

AH. I KNOW YOUR FACE, DON'T I?

THE BLACKEST OF THE BLACK SHEEP.



ME?

I'M JUST THE GUY HOLDING TWO LIVE GRENADES.

AND I'M SUPPOSED TO BELIEVE YOU'LL KILL YOURSELF TO GET TO ME. IS THAT RIGHT, JAMES GORDON, JUNIOR?



DOESN'T MATTER WHAT YOU BELIEVE, JOKER.

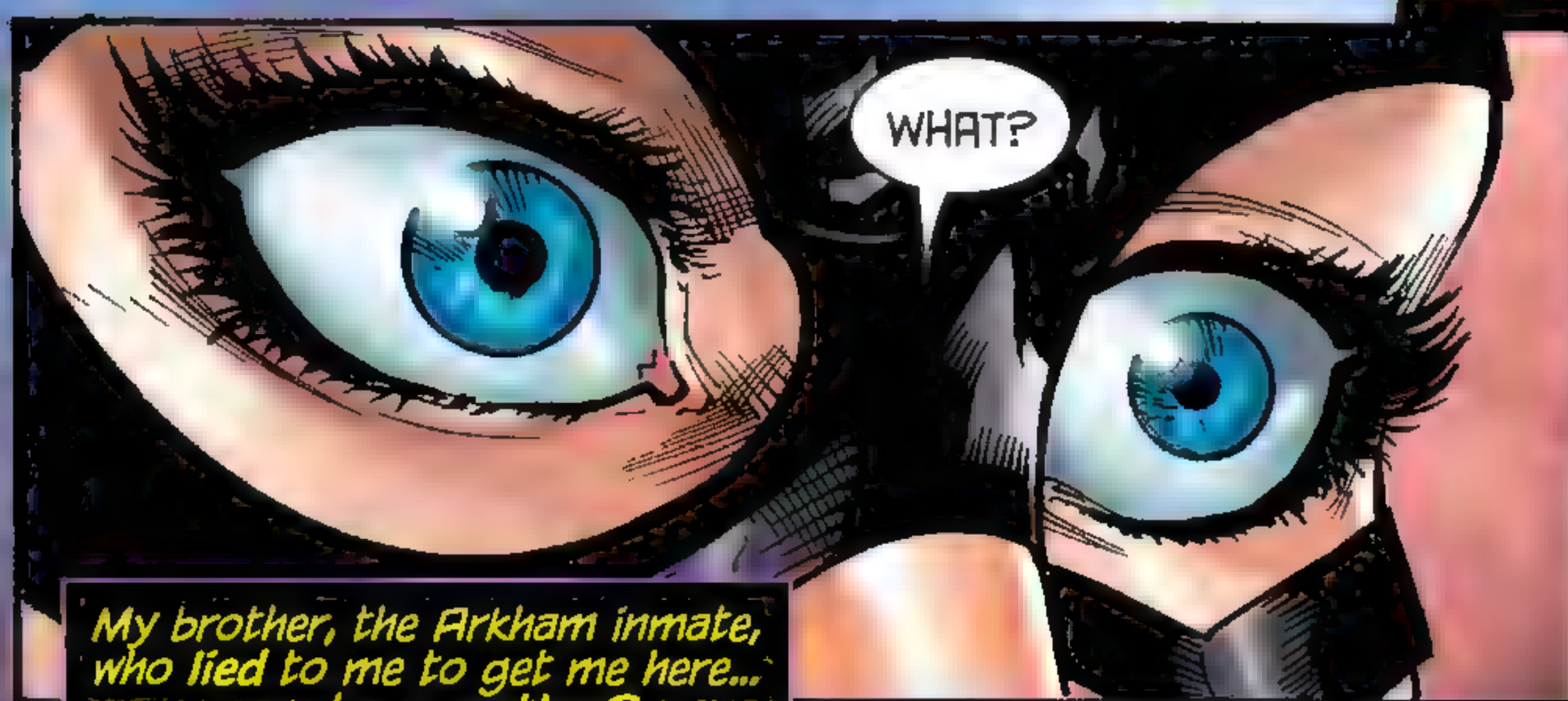
I HAVE A MESSAGE FOR THE BRIDE.

I GOT MRS. GORDON FROM THE SKATING RINK, BATGIRL. SHE'S SAFE.

Well, well, well.

I DON'T KNOW WHO THIS FELLA THINKS HE IS, BUT HE'S TALKING GIBBERISH.

OH.



WHAT?

My brother, the Arkham inmate, who lied to me to get me here... saved our mother?



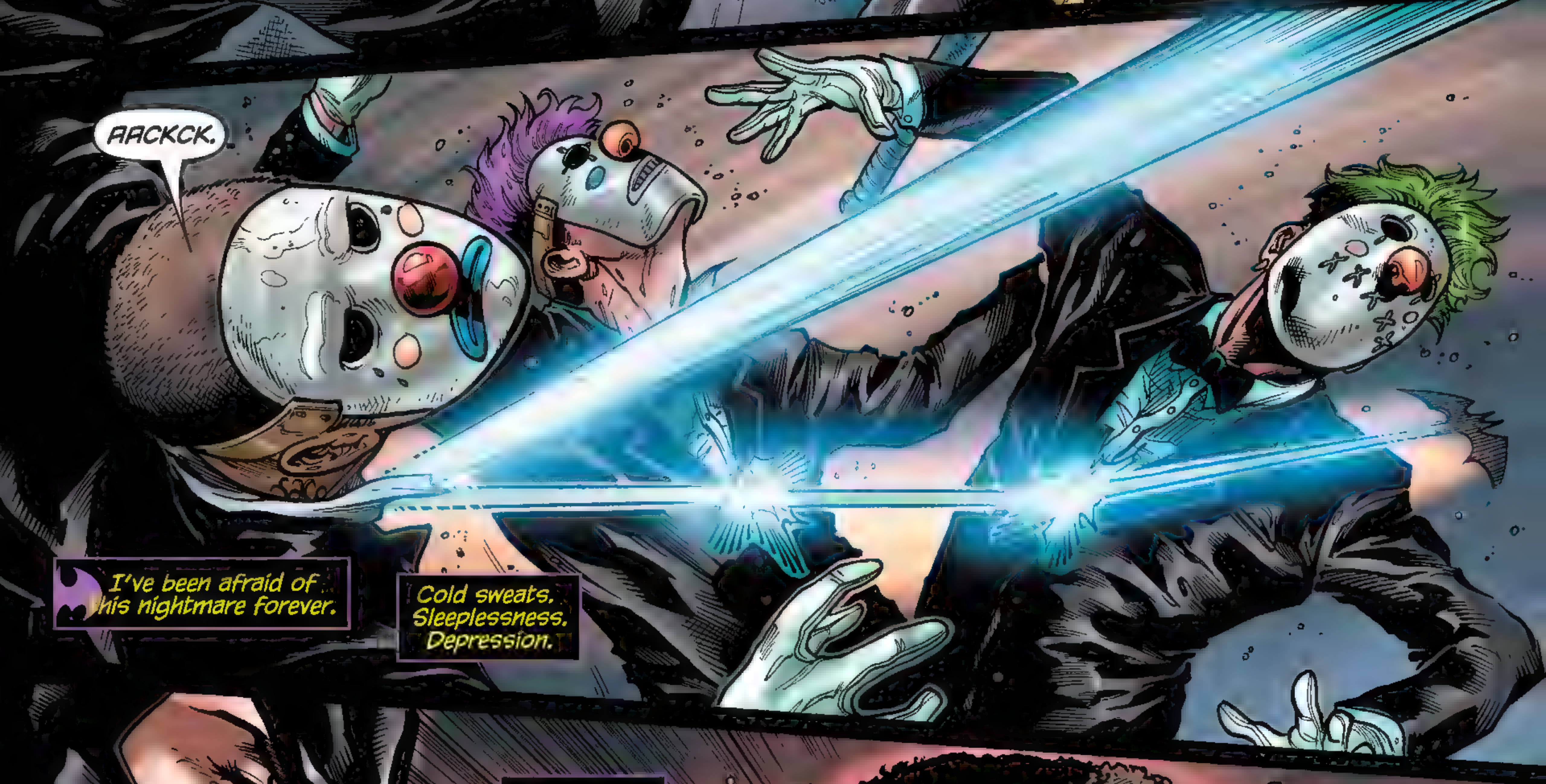
Doesn't that just
do and change
everything.



Maybe James is lying.
He's good at that.

But I have
no choice.

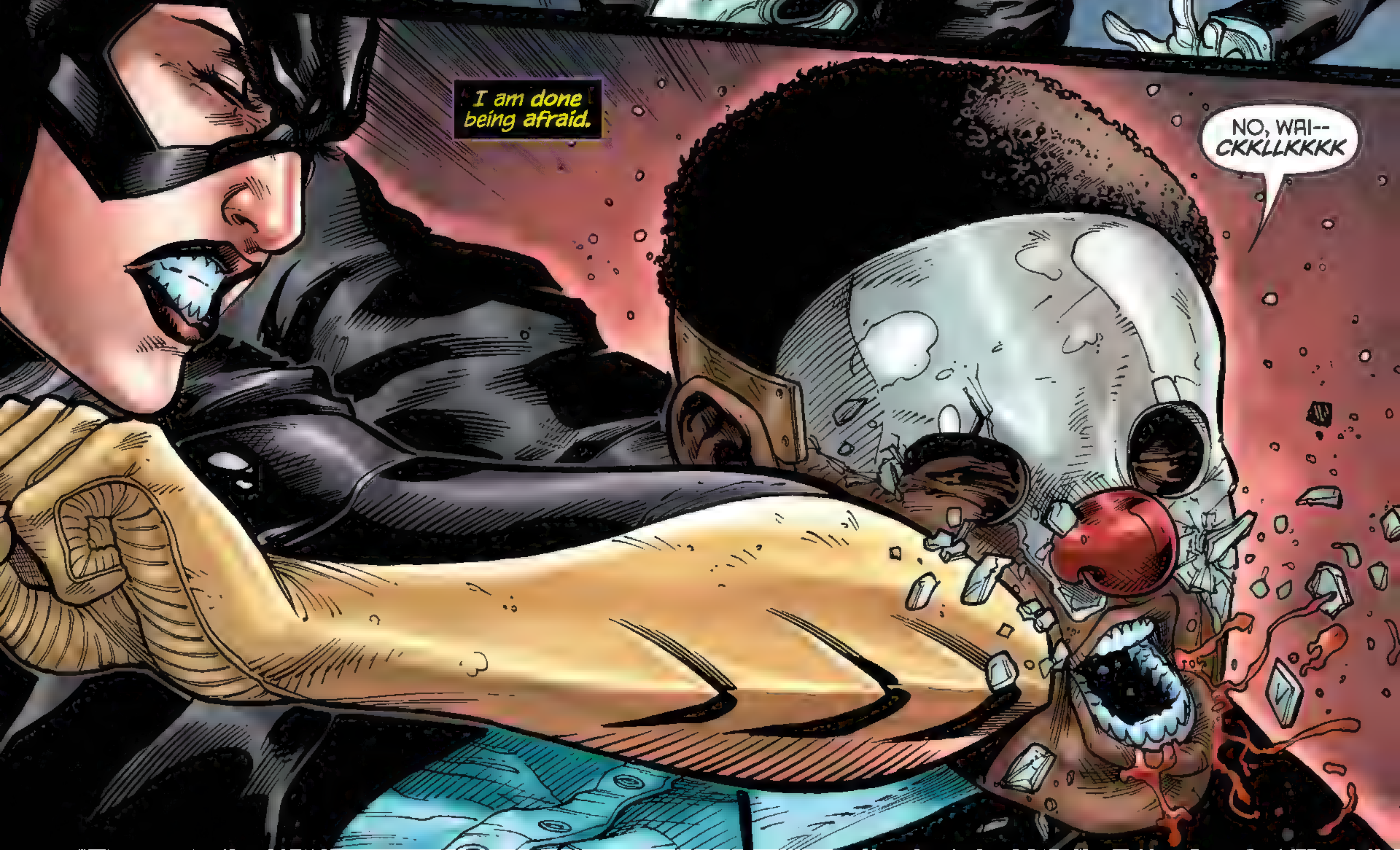
SHOOT
HER! SHOOT
HER!



ACKCK.

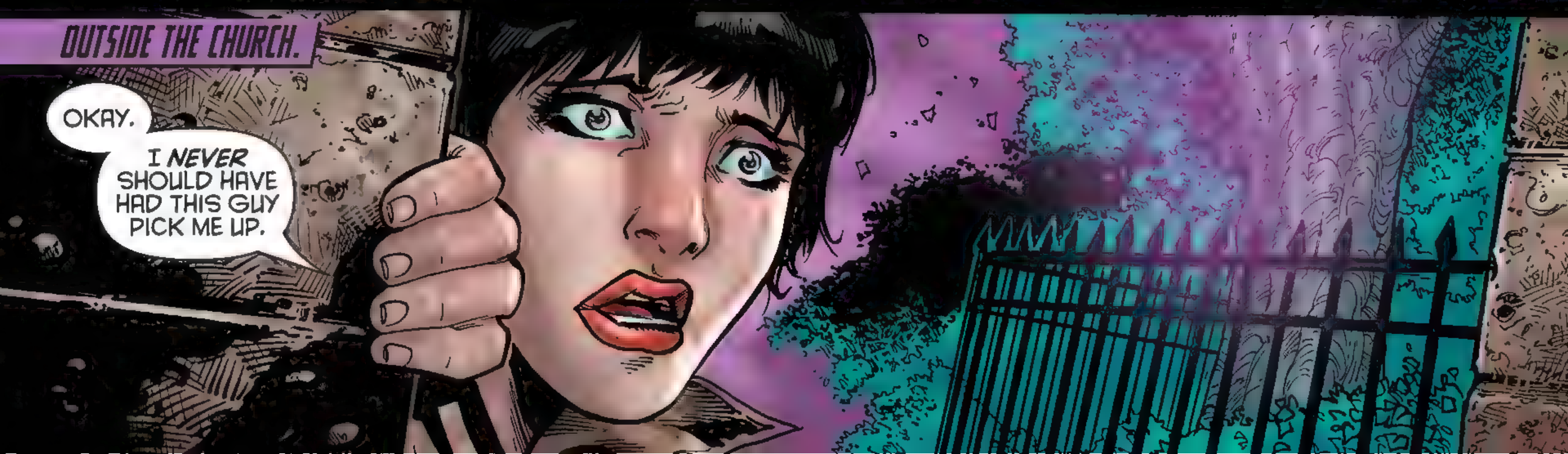
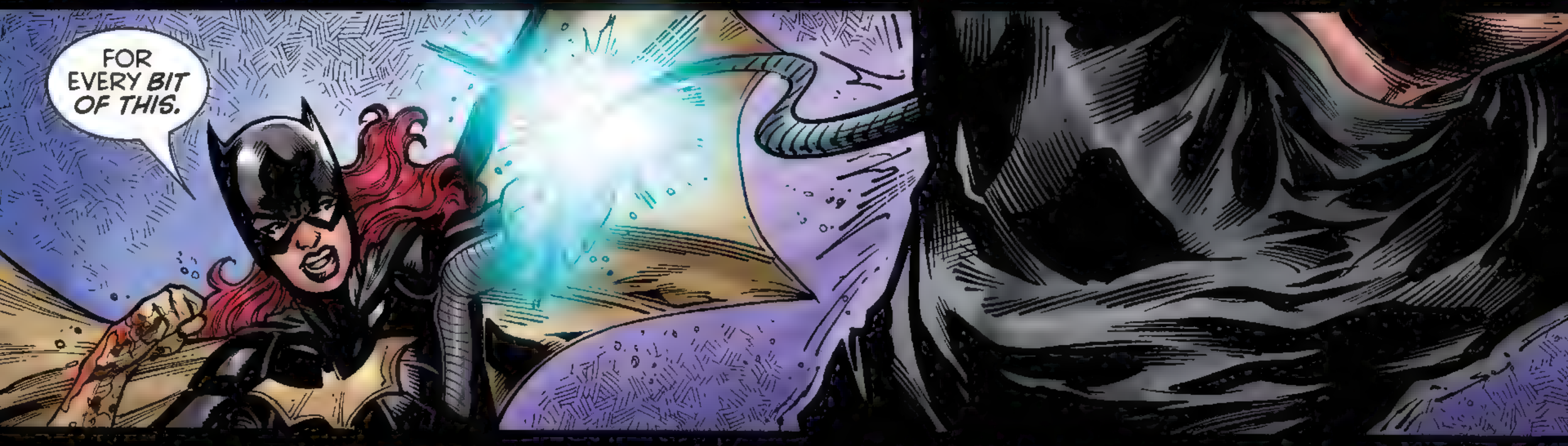
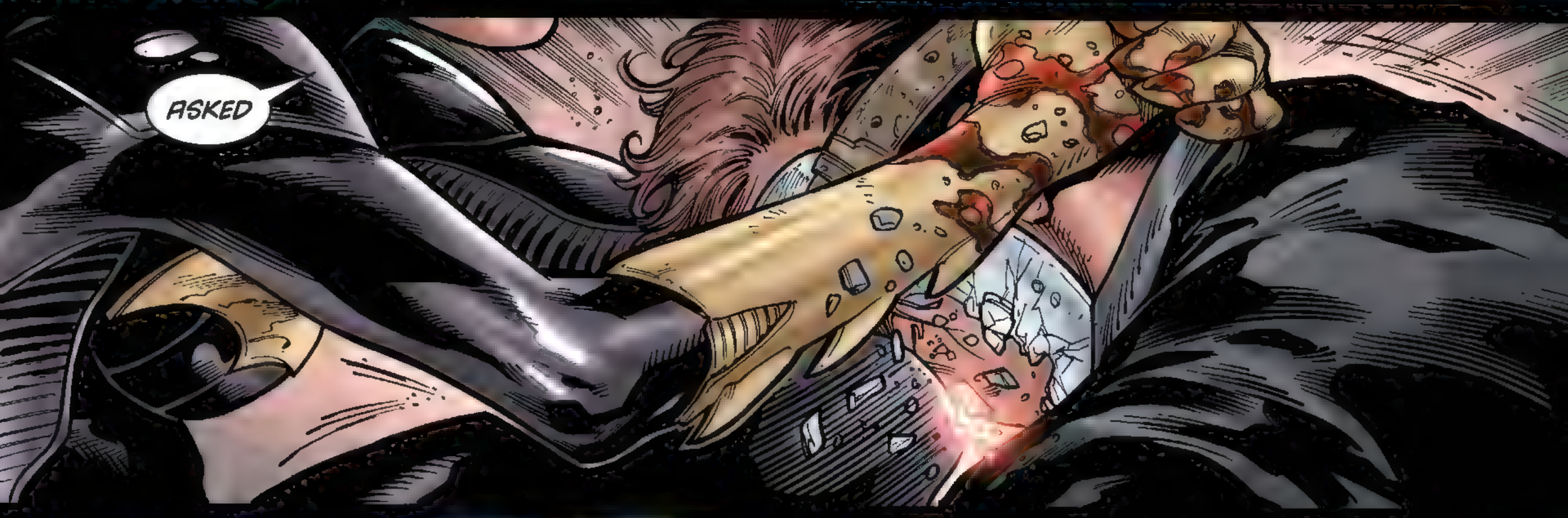
I've been afraid of
his nightmare forever.

Cold sweats,
Sleeplessness,
Depression.



I am done
being afraid.

NO, WAI--
CKLLKKKK





ALYSIA YE OH...

...WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE?



YOU KNOW, SHE USED TO BEAT ME UP LIKE THAT. PASSION FADES FOR US ALL.

I'M BEGINNING TO THINK THAT THAT GIRL MIGHT BE CRAZIER THAN I AM.

I HAVE A DEAL FOR YOU, JOKER.

IT'S A ONE-TIME OFFER.



WAIT. OKAY. UNCLE, OKAY?

I GIVE. MERCY.



MERCY?



Try telling that to my mother.

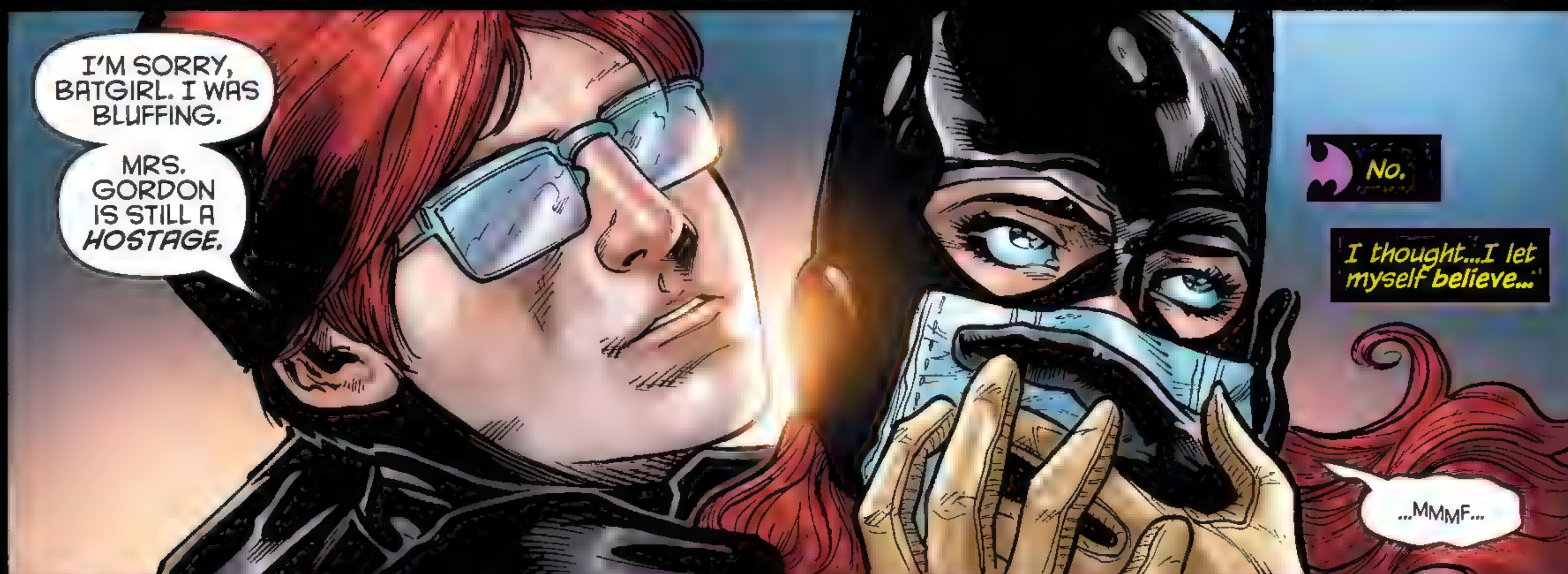
-GGKHK-



SORRY.

I'M FRESH OUT.

The priest looks more scared of me than the clown.



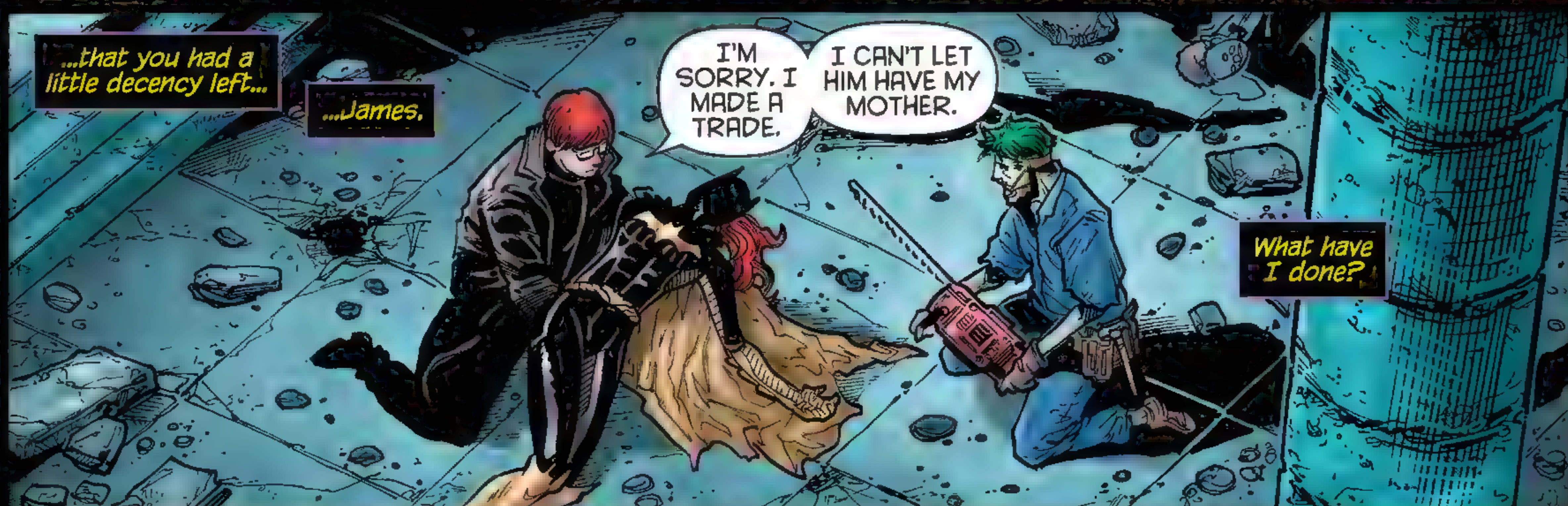
I'M SORRY, BATGIRL. I WAS BLUFFING.

MRS. GORDON IS STILL A HOSTAGE.

No.

I thought...I let myself believe...

...MMMF...



...that you had a little decency left...

...James.

I'M SORRY. I MADE A TRADE.

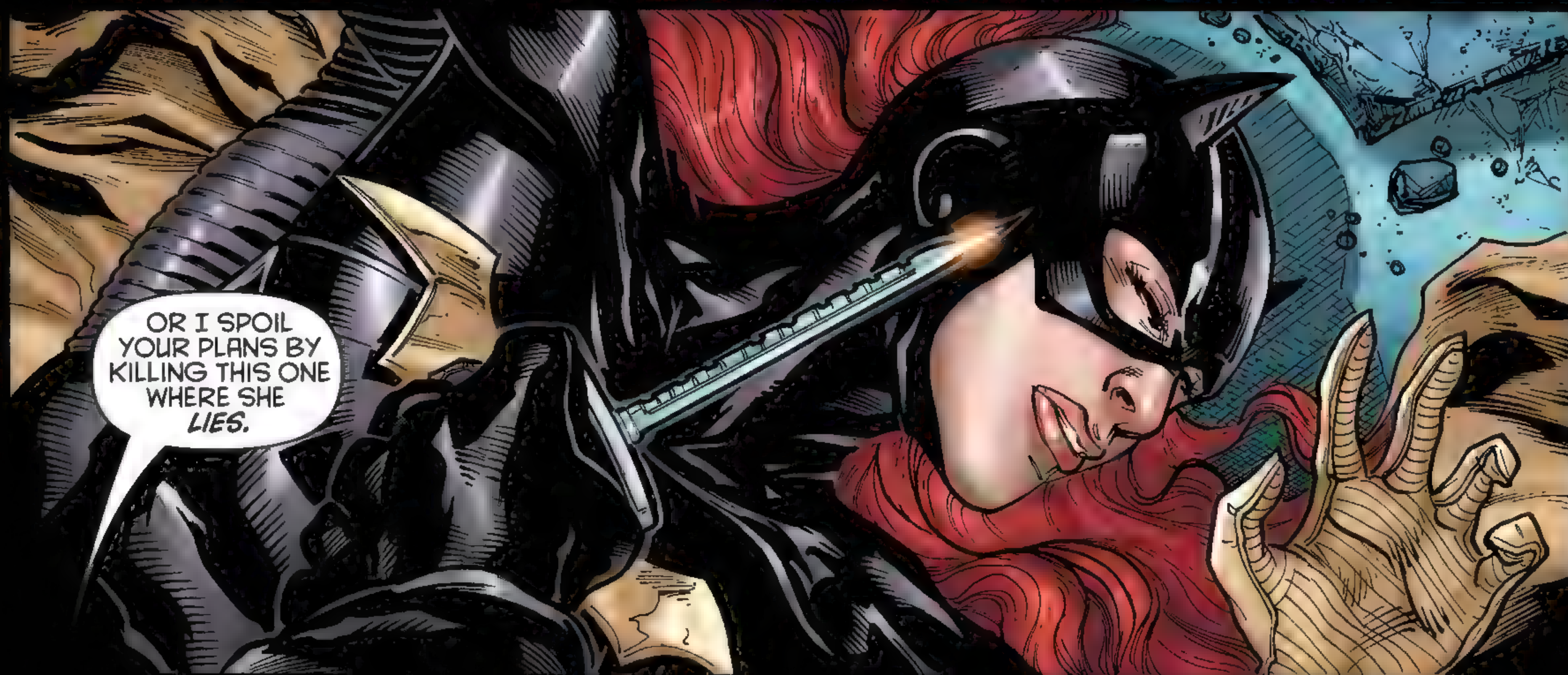
I CAN'T LET HIM HAVE MY MOTHER.

What have I done?



OH, YOU ARE A TREASURE. MAYBE I SHOULD'VE MARRIED YOU, GRENADE BOY.

LET THE WOMAN IN THE SKATING RINK GO. AND I WALK AWAY.

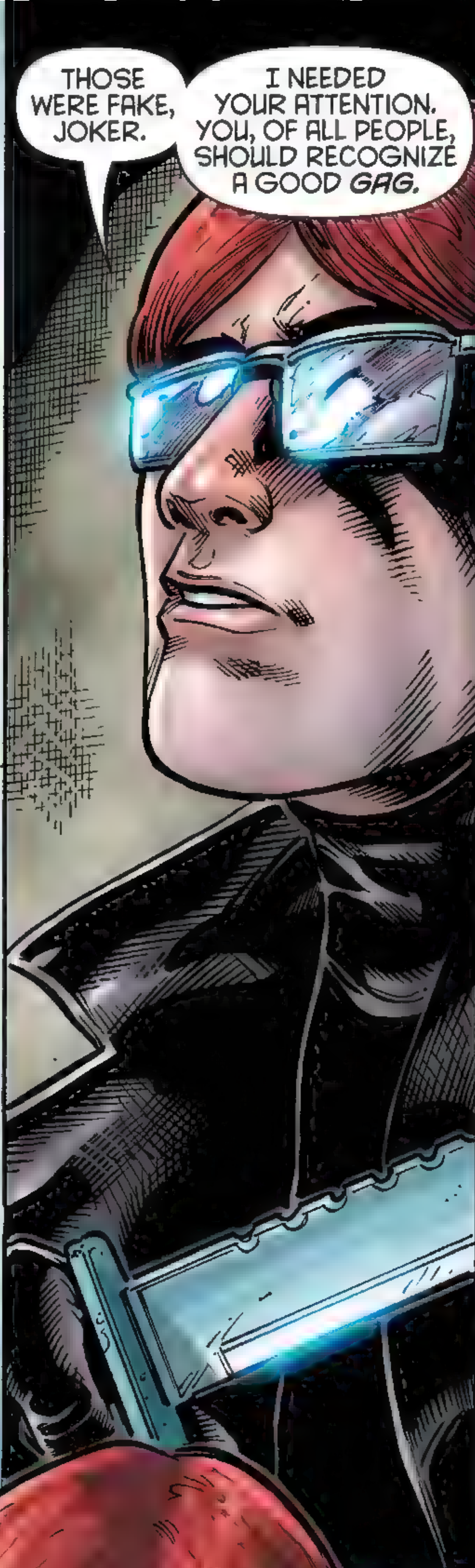


OR I SPOIL YOUR PLANS BY KILLING THIS ONE WHERE SHE LIES.



THAT
WOULDN'T DO.
I HAVE A GRAND
RECEPTION
PLANNED.

WHAT
HAPPENED TO
YOUR GRENADES,
SONNY JIM?



THOSE
WERE FAKE,
JOKER.

I NEEDED
YOUR ATTENTION.
YOU, OF ALL PEOPLE,
SHOULD RECOGNIZE
A GOOD GAG.



WELL, I ALWAYS
SAY IT'S NICE TO HAVE
ANOTHER SPIDER IN THE
PORRIDGE.

BUT,
JUST FOR
FUNSIES...

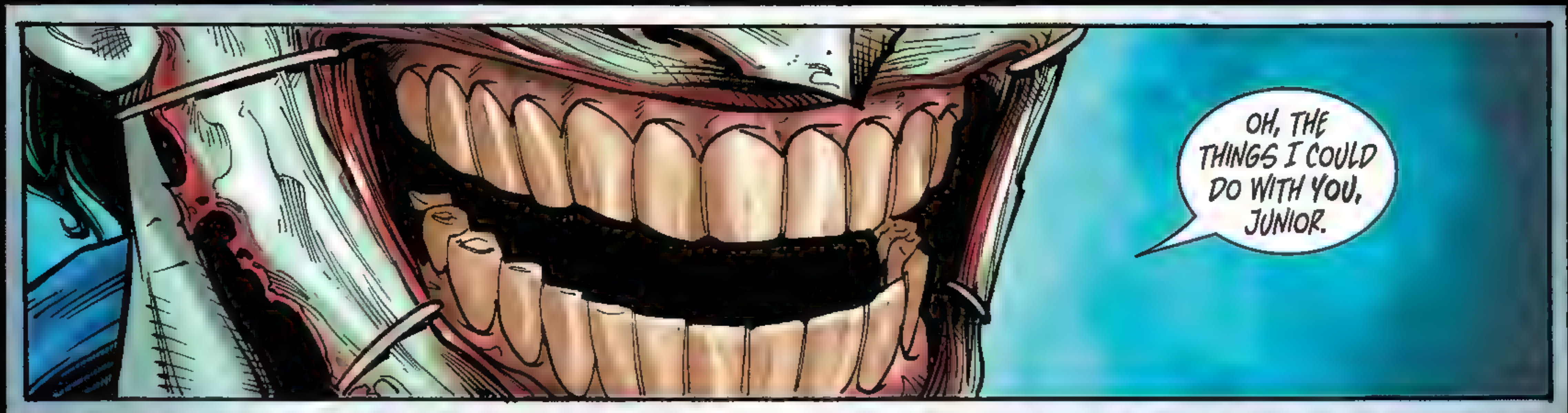
...WHAT'S
TO KEEP
ME FROM HAVING
LEFTY HERE FOLD
YOU INTO AN ORIGAMI
SWAN AND KEEPING
BOTH DELICIOUS
REDHEADS?

I THOUGHT
YOU MIGHT
ASK.

THE OTHER
GRENADES
WERE FAKES,
JOKER.



BUT
THIS ONE
ISN'T.



OH, THE
THINGS I COULD
DO WITH YOU,
JUNIOR.



Pain.

Head hurts.
Everything
hurts.

Where am
I? What's
happening?

WAKEY
WAKEY, CUPPY
CAKEY!

I'M AFRAID I
HAVE TO BREAK OFF
OUR ENGAGEMENT,
DARLING
DEAREST.

OH, AND
YOU SIMPLY WON'T
BELIEVE WHAT I'VE
GOT UNDER HERE
FOR YOU!

I'm sorry, Mom.
I rolled the dice.

And I
lost.

TO BE CONCLUDED IN
BATMAN #17

After publishing the story of the infamous "Killing Family" in the "Death of the Family" arc, DC Comics has now released the "Curtain Call" issue, which is the final issue of the "Death of the Family" arc. This issue is the final issue of the "Death of the Family" arc, and it is the final issue of the "Death of the Family" arc.

DC COMICS™ PRESENTS: **NIGHTWING**

DEATH OF THE FAMILY

CURTAIN CALL

KYLE HIGGINS Writer • **EDDY BARROWS** Pencils

EBER FERREIRA Inks • **ROD REIS** Colors

CARLOS M. MANGUAL Letters

BARROWS, FERREIRA & REIS Cover

KATIE KUBERT Assistant Editor

BRIAN CUNNINGHAM Editor

Nightwing created by
Marv Wolfman and
George Pérez

The Joker has
them. He has
them all.

And it's my
fault.

DOWNTOWN GOTHAM CITY.

Batman has been lying to us for years--the Joker knows who we are.*

After he murdered Jimmy, I rushed the other members of Haly's out of Gotham.

But he got to my ex-girlfriend, Raya. He killed her--

--and sent me a party invitation carved into her stomach.

*SEE BATMAN #15. --B.C.

A surprise party hosted by Haly's Circus.

DEET
DEET
DEET

INCOMING CALL -
SONIA BRANCH

It's the second time
Sonia's called since
I ran out of her
apartment.

I can't deal
with any of
that now.

Now, I'm only
focused on one
thing.

That whatever
happens to
Haly's...

AMUSEMENT
MILE

...is on me.

KKKWEEOOOWW
IS
THIS THING
ON?

THERE!
THAT'S BETTER!

I GOTTA
ADMIT, I ABSOLUTELY
LOVE WHAT'S BEEN DONE
WITH THE PLACE!

IT'S COME
SO FAR SINCE THE
LAST TIME I WAS
HERE. IT'S SO...
ALIVE.

OF COURSE,
THAT'S NOT TO
SAY IT COULDN'T
USE A MORE...

DEET

...PERSONAL
TOUCH.

TEHEHE
HAHA

BWAHA
HAHAHAHA
HAHA

HAHA
HAHAHAHA
HAHAHAHA

HEEEEEE
HEHEHEHEH
HEHHEH

WHATEVER THIS IS,
JOKER, IT'S BETWEEN
US! LET THE CIRCUS
GO! YOU'VE GOT
ME HERE!

OH, DON'T
WORRY...IT'S NOT
THEM I WANT.

THIS WAY

THIS
WAY, LITTLE
BIRD!

YOU KNOW, I GUESS I SHOULDN'T BE SURPRISED THAT THIS FREAK SHOW IS SO IMPORTANT TO YOU, NIGHTWING, SEEING AS YOU SHOWED UP IN EVERY CITY THEY TRAVELED TO THE PAST YEAR.

WHEN YOU REALLY THINK ABOUT IT, YOU AND HALY'S MAKES PERFECT SENSE.

THE CIRCUS HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE PLACE WHERE BAD KIDS RUN TO WHEN THEY'RE RUNNING AWAY FROM HOME.

WHICH IS WHAT YOU ARE.

EVEN AFTER BATMAN GAVE YOU EVERYTHING... YOU ABANDONED HIM.

IT WAS ALMOST TOO CUTE.

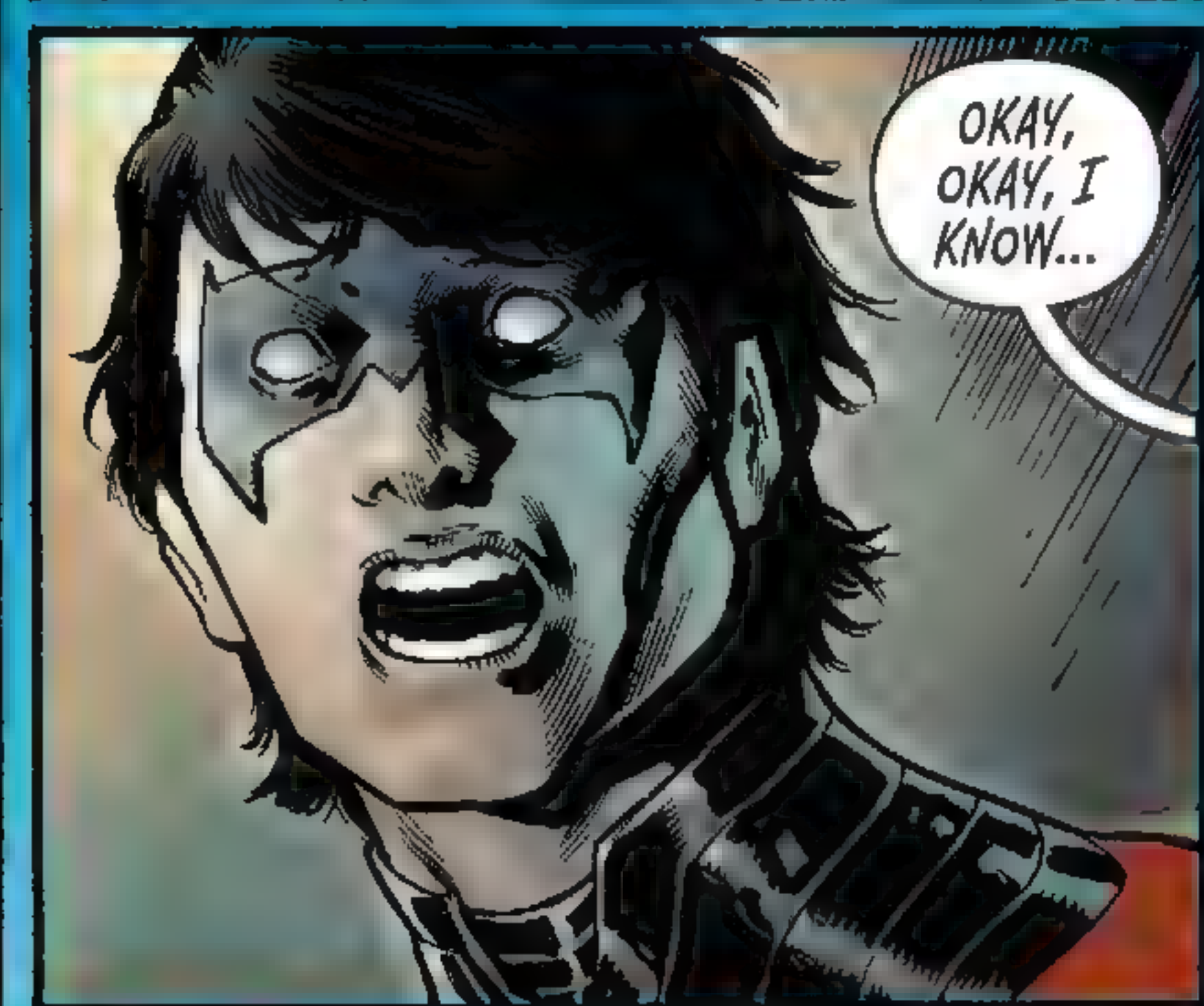
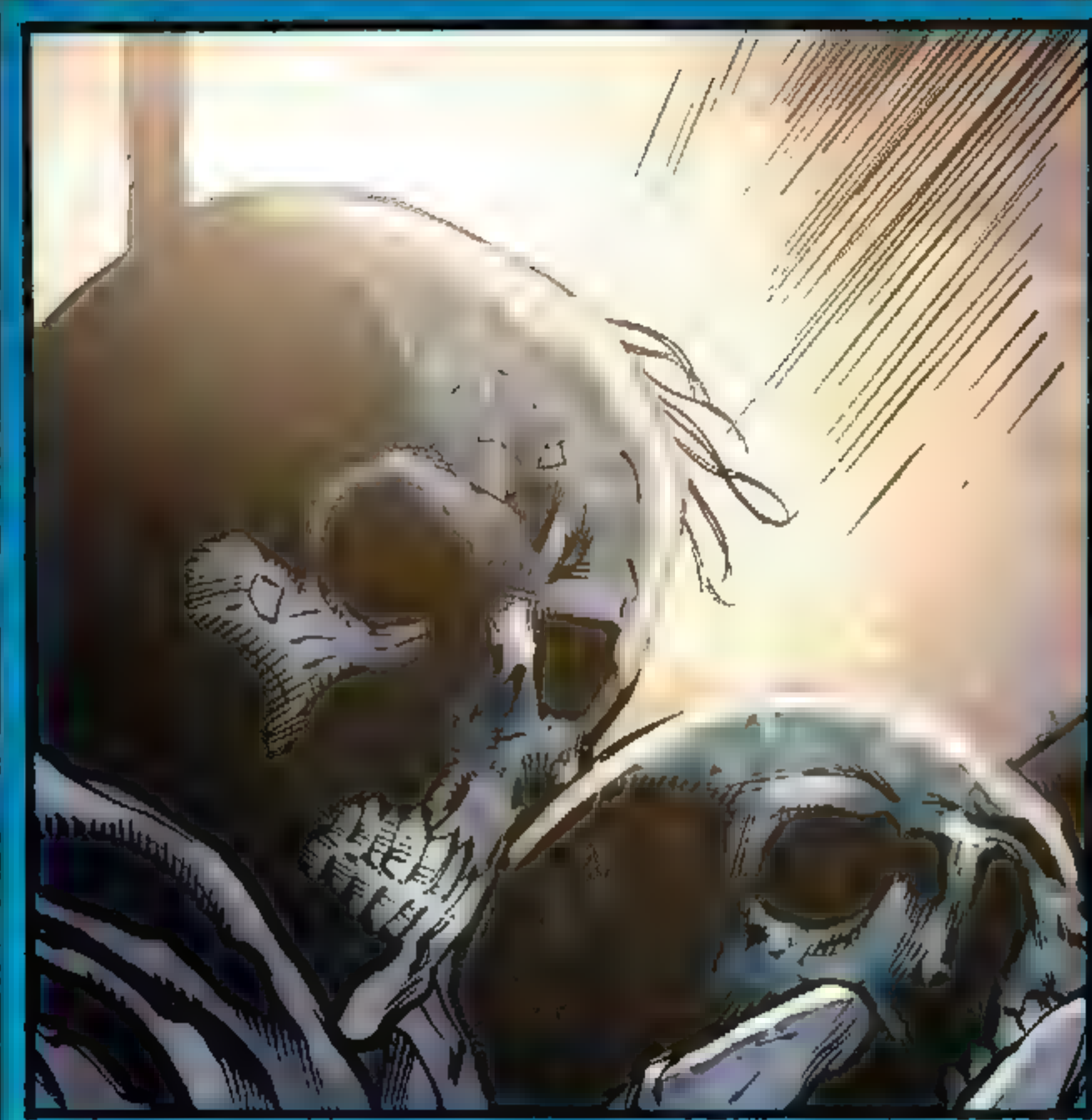
WHICH IS WHY I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU'RE DOING NOW.

COMING BACK TO GOTHAM? TRYING TO BUILD A NEST?

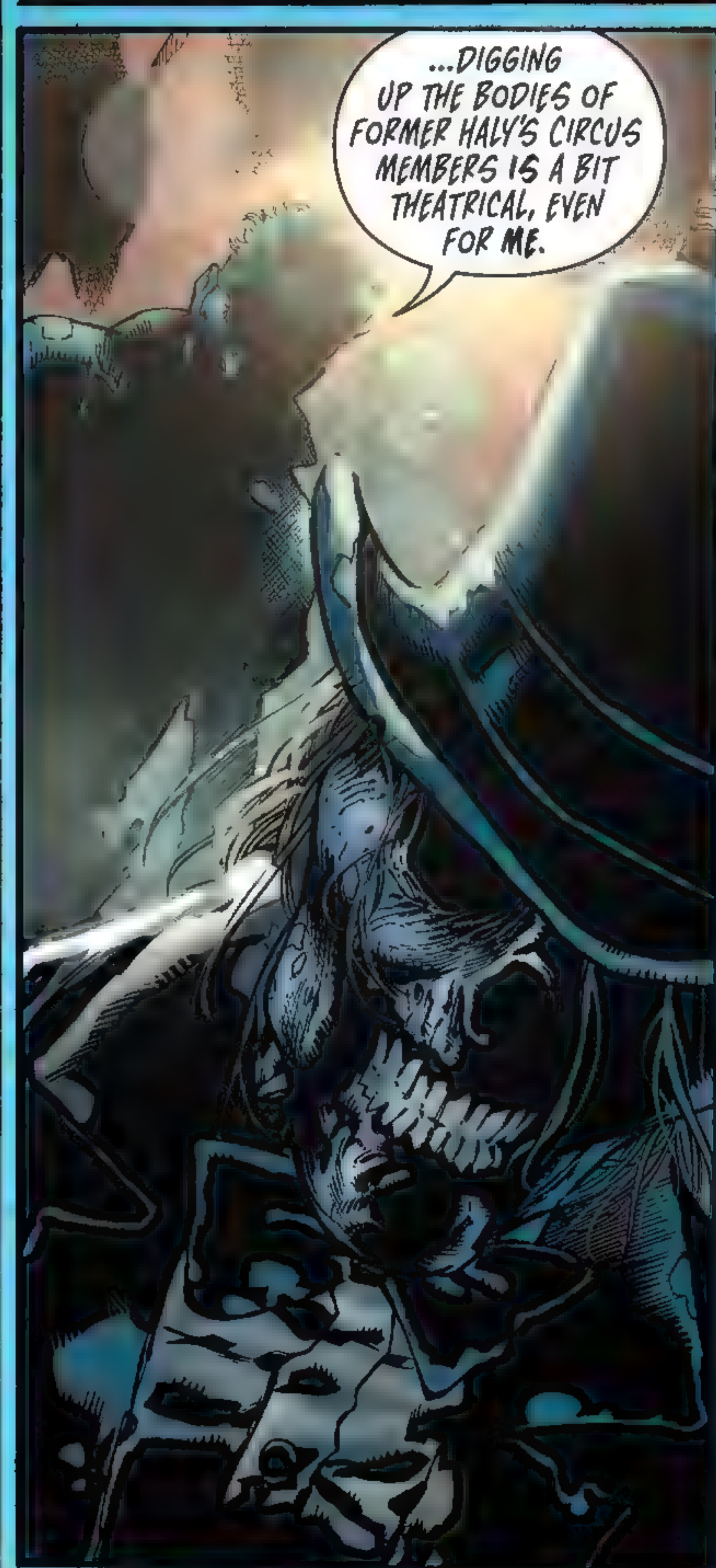
THAT'S NOT YOU, LITTLE BIRD. YOU SHOULD BE FLYING FREE.

NOT SHACKING UP...

...WITH
A BUNCH OF
DEADBEATS.



OKAY,
OKAY, I
KNOW...



...DIGGING
UP THE BODIES OF
FORMER HALY'S CIRCUS
MEMBERS IS A BIT
THEATRICAL, EVEN
FOR ME.

BUT IT'S
NOT LIKE I HUNG
BONES FROM THE
TRAPEZE.

THAT'D
BE CRAZY.

Everyone I
know.

Everyone I
care about.

He can find
them.

They'll never
be safe.

THIS...THIS
ENDS--

--NOW!

THUNK

THUNK

THAT'S
THE IDEA! OF
COURSE, THE BEST
ENDINGS--

--ARE
THE EXPLOSIVE
ONES.

DEET

THOOM

THOOM

THOOM

Breathe...
can't...can't--

Focus. Get
the rebreather
on. Before...

HEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE
HEHEHE

HAHAHAHAHAHAHA
HAHAHAHA

HEHEHEHE!

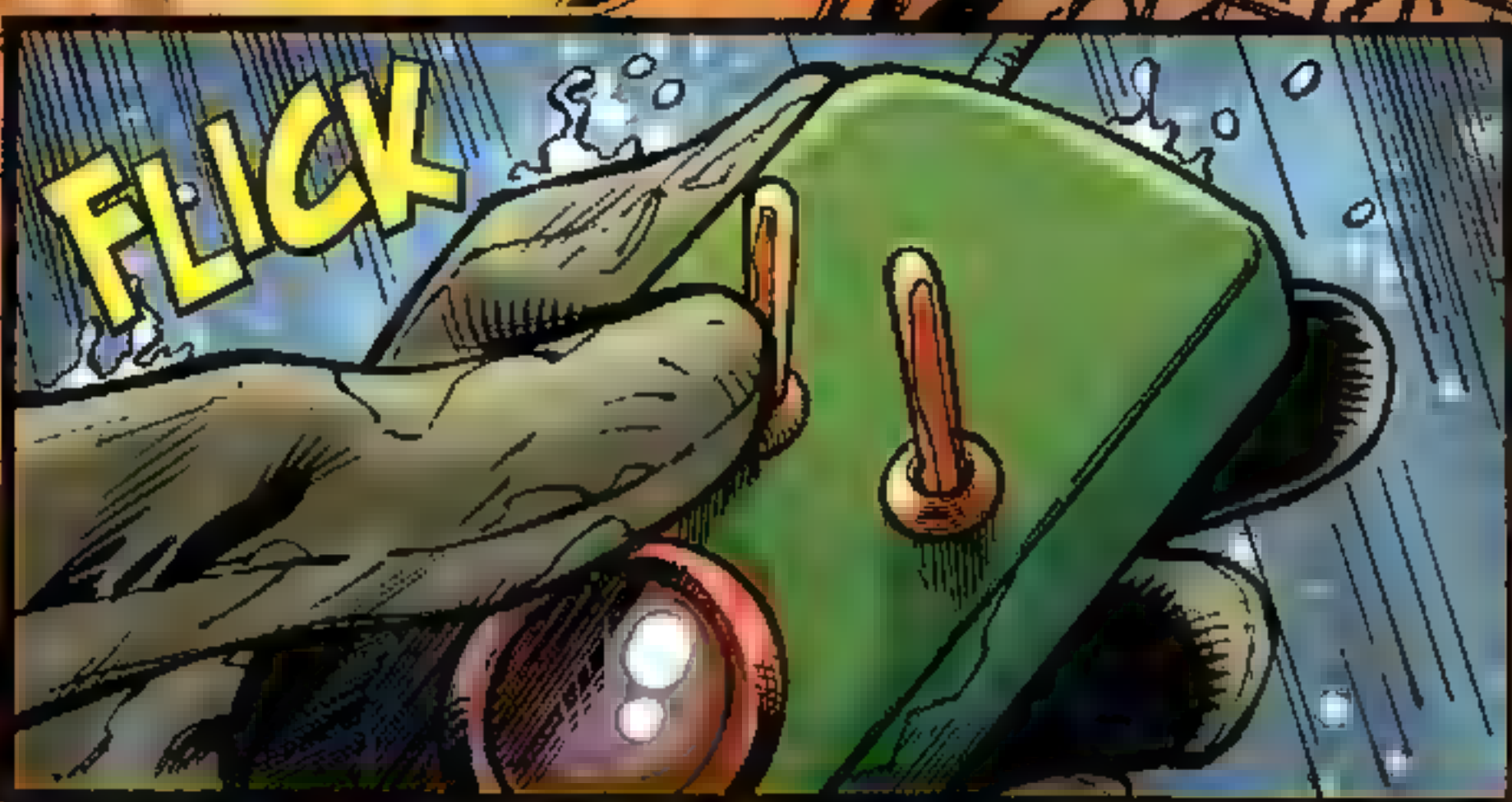


ARGG!

OH,
MAN...

KABOOM

Gotta
keep moving,
Grayson...
keep--



KAKOOOM





WITH AN
EFFORT LIKE
THAT...

...IT'S NO
WONDER
I'M DEAD!

COME ONNNNN,
DICKIE...I THOUGHT
YOU WERE S'POSED TO
BE GOOOOOD!

JIMMY...

OH,
HE *IS*
GOOD.

NO...

HE'S JUST
NOT GOOD
ENOUGH.



I GUESS
YOU'RE RIGHT,
RAYA. LOOK AT
HIM. HE GOT US
KILLED...

...AND
NOW HE'S TOO
PATHETIC TO DO
ANYTHING BUT
DIE.

RIGHT,
DICKIE?

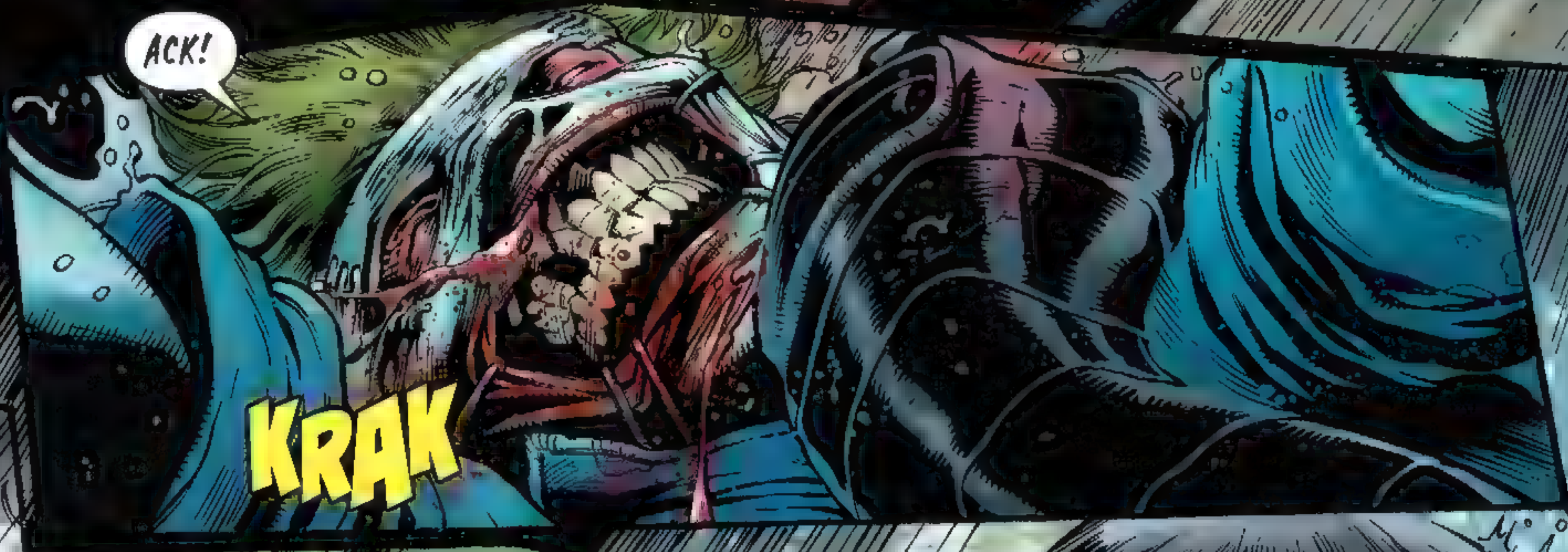
NO...



...NO...



...NOOOO!



THE INVITATION DID SAY IT WAS A SURPRISE PARTY.

AND WHAT KIND OF HOST WOULD I BE...



...IF I DIDN'T HAVE A LITTLE SOMETHING EXTRA FOR THE WORST OF THE BAT-FAKES?

THE ONE THAT MAKES MY BATMAN THE WEAKEST.

YOU SEE, NIGHTWING, MORE THAN ANY OF THE OTHERS, YOU PUT YOUR FAITH IN RELATIONSHIPS. YOU INSIST ON SURROUNDING YOURSELF WITH PEOPLE.

BUT PEOPLE WILL ALWAYS LET YOU DOWN.

ARRHH!

OOF!

HERE... LET ME SHOW YOU.





COME
NOW...

...YOU
CAN'T DIE
YET.

NO,
NO, NO...NOT
YET, LITTLE
BIRDIE...

...NOT YET.

STILL WITH
US?

→UHHNNNN...←

GOOD.
TRUST ME...

...THE FOOD
HERE IS FAR
TOO GOOD TO
MISS.

DEATH OF THE FAMILY
TO BE CONCLUDED IN BATMAN #17!

MY NAME IS
ROY HARPER

THE
MASH
IS ON

HAW
HA HA
HAW!

WE ARE
IN SEARCH OF
OUR FRIEND
JASON TODD

TEE
HEE!

JUST ABOUT
SECOND TO THE LAST
THING I EXPECTED

TURNED UP AN ARMY
OF DERANGED JOKER
STAND-INS

BUT HEY—IT
IS GOTHAM
CITY, RIGHT?

THEY
WHO ENTER

HAW
HA HA
HAW!

HA HE
HE HA
HO!

DEATH OF THE FAMILY FAMILY MATTERS!

WRITTEN BY SCOTT LOBDELL
PENCILS BY TIMOTHY GREEN II
INKS BY WAYNE FAUCHER
COLORS BY BLOND LETTERS BY TRAVIS LANHAM
COVER BY TYLER KIRKHAM & BATT WITH ALEX SINCLAIR
ASSISTANT EDITOR • DARREN SHAN EDITOR • EDDIE BERGANZA

THE DROP DEAD
LAST THING I
EXPECTED...?

THESE KIDS
CALLED "TEEN
TITANS"

ITURNS
OUT THEY'RE
LOOKING FOR
THEIR OWN
PERKLETS
LEADER
RED ROBIN



TELL ME
WHY WE DO
NOT SIMPLY
INCUBATE THIS
CREATURE.

BECAUSE I
SAW THESE PEOPLE
TRANSFORM.
ONLY A
FEW MINUTES
AGO! *

WHAT IF
THE JOKER'S
GAS HASN'T
"SET" YET?

MAYBE
THERE'S A WAY
TO SAVE
THEM?

* TEEN
TITANS #15!
--ED.



THAT IS
A CRAZY
THIN STRAW
TO GRASP
AT, KIDS!

BUT
THE JOKER IS
THE KING OF
CRAZYVILLE.

SO UNTIL
WE KNOW THESE
POOR PEOPLE ARE
PAST THE POINT OF
NO RETURN...

I AGREE,
WE NEED TO DO
EVERYTHING WE
CAN TO HELP
THEM!



SO LISTEN,
SPEEDY...

ARE
YOU TALKING
TO ME?

I AIN'T
TALKING TO
MYSELF!

THE
NAME IS KID
FLASH.

OH,
WAS HOPING
THAT WAS A
JOKE.

EITHER WAY,
YOU NEED TO USE WHAT
IS CLEARLY YOUR SUPER
SPEED TO CORRAL
THESE PEOPLE.

WE CAN'T AFFORD
LETTING EVEN ONE OF
THEM GET AWAY UNTIL
WE CAN FIND YOUR
MIRACLE CURE!

WONDER
GIRL?

WONDER
GIRL, WHAT?



WAIT,
WHAT--?!

YOU'RE
SERIOUSLY
CHECKING IN
WITH THIS GIRL
BEFORE YOU
LISTEN TO ME?

BELEY THAT
ORDER, KID
FLASH.

LOOK,
CLEM--

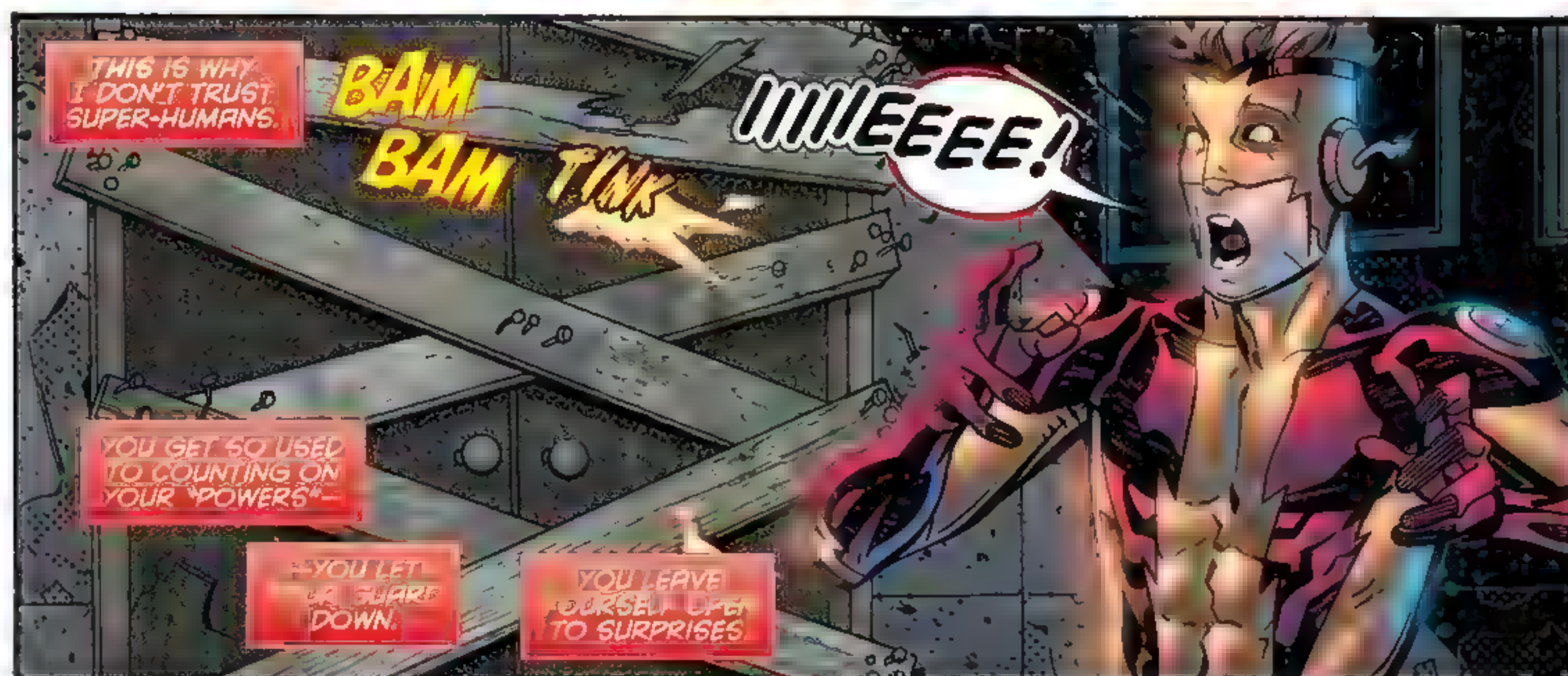
IT'S
ARSENAL!

WHILE I
SPEAK ON BEHALF
OF THE REST OF THE
TITANS WHEN I SAY
THANK YOU FOR
THE LAST-MINUTE
BACKUP...

THE
TRUTH IS WE
HAVE OUR OWN
WAY OF DOING
THINGS.

WE HIT
THINGS.

AND WHEN
THAT DOESN'T
WORK OUT...?





GUYS,
NO ONE SAYS
WE HAVE TO LIKE
EACH OTHER...

...BUT WE'RE
BOTH LOOKING
FOR PEOPLE WHO
MEAN THE WORLD
TO US.

THE JOKER
CLEARLY HAS
YOUR RED ROBIN
AND OUR RED
HOOD.

THE ONLY
WAY TO GET
THEM BACK ALIVE
IS IF WE WORK
TOGETHER.

WE DON'T
NEED CAREER
COUNSELING
FROM A GUY IN
A BASEBALL
CAP.

KID FLASH IS
RIGHT. WE WERE
DOING FINE BEFORE
YOU GOT HERE.

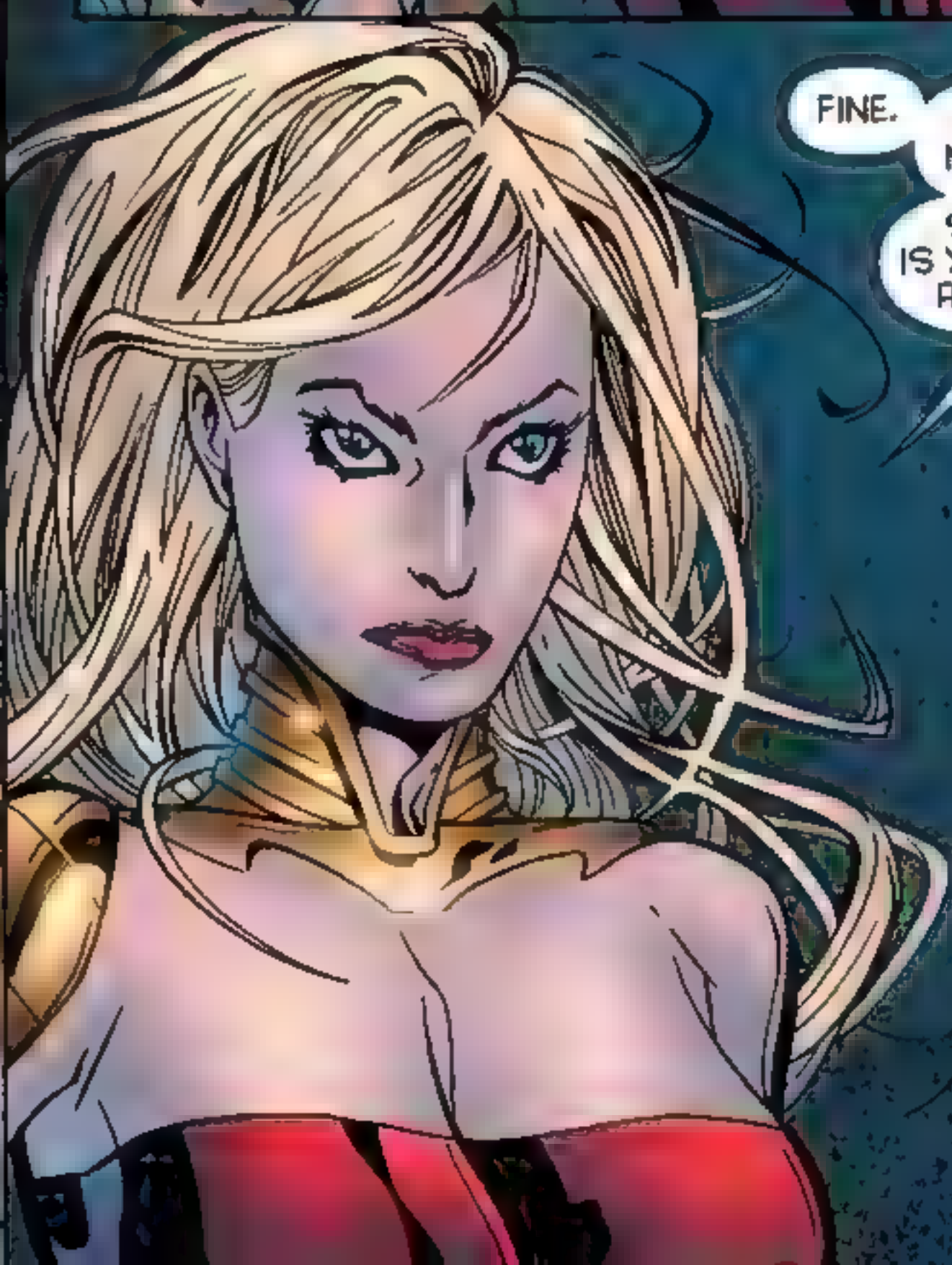
IF I
MIGHT,
WONDER
GIRL?

ANYONE
WHO HAS LIVED
THIS LONG FIGHTING
WITH JUST A BOW AND
ARROW... MUST HAVE
SOMETHING
GOING ON.

I'LL
TAKE THE
COMPLIMENTS
WHERE I CAN
GET THEM.

SOLSTICE
IS RIGHT.

I'M
WILLING TO
LISTEN TO
HIM UNTIL
I'M NOT.



FINE. FOR
NOW.
SO WHAT
IS YOUR PLAN,
ARSENAL?



I DON'T
HAVE ONE.

MOTHER
OF X'HAL.



PING PING PING

THAT ALARM
THAT JUST WENT
OFF?

IT'S MY
ANALYSIS
ARROW.

NOW
I HAVE A
PLAN.

I DREW BLOOD FROM ONE OF THESE GUYS AND WI-FIED ALL THE INFORMATION FOR ANALYSIS...

"...TO MY SUPER SECRET FLOATING HEADQUARTERS NEARBY.

"YES, REALLY.

"THE LAB ON BOARD HAS BROKEN DOWN ANY SYNTHETIC OR NON-NORMATIVE ELEMENTS THAT WOULD NORMALLY BE FOUND IN A HUMAN'S BLOOD SYSTEM.

"WORKING BACKWARDS... IF WE CAN COUNTERACT OR NULLIFY THOSE ELEMENTS BY INTRODUCING BLOCKING AGENTS INTO EACH OF THE VICTIMS, WE STAND A BAZILLION-IN-ONE CHANCE OF RETURNING THEM TO NORMAL."

THE COMPUTER IDENTIFIED A WAREHOUSE ON THE DOCKS WHERE ALL THOSE COUNTER-SYNTHETICS ARE LOCATED IN ONE PLACE.

CLEARLY THE JOKER FIGURED TEAM BATMAN WAS GOING TO BE TOO BUSY FIGHTING FOR THEIR LIVES AGAINST HIM.

SO WE NEED THE FOUR OF YOU TO GET THE STUFF AND BRING IT HERE, WHILE BUNKER AND I FIGHT OFF THE LUNATIC FRINGE.

SEE, GANG? IT'S ALL WORKING OUT.

WAIT-- "BUNKER AND I WILL" DO WHAT?!

CREAK CLANG



WE'LL
BE BACK IN
A MOMENT,
ARSENAL.

YOU
NEED TO
BE--THE LONGER
THESE PEOPLE ARE
JOKERIZED, THE
LESS LIKELY WE'LL
BE ABLE TO
HELP THEM!

YOU
JUST USED
"JOKERIZED"
IN A SENTENCE.
SERIOUSLY?

THOSE
POOR PEOPLE,
KID FLASH--WHAT
IF WE'RE ALREADY
TOO LATE?

"TOO
LATE"? ME AM
NOT FAMILIAR
WITH THIS
CONCEPT.



ARSENAL, HOW
LONG BEFORE THOSE
CRAZIES BREAK
OUT OF--?

KRUNCHK

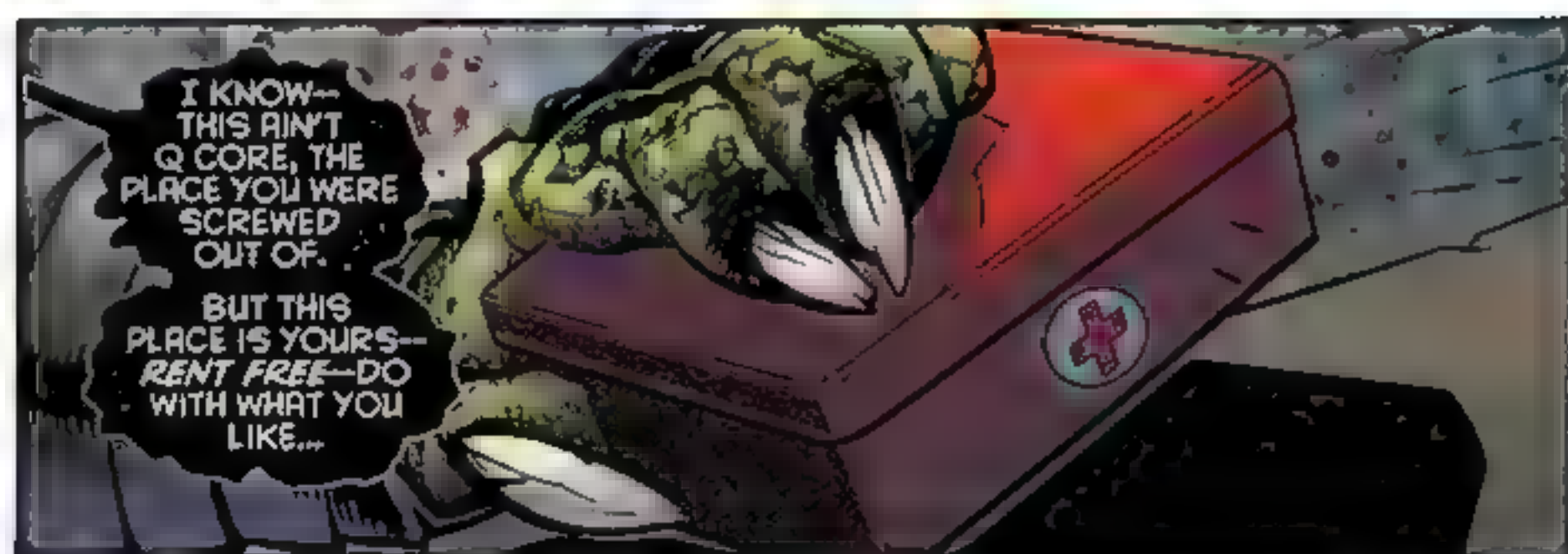
NOT
LONG.

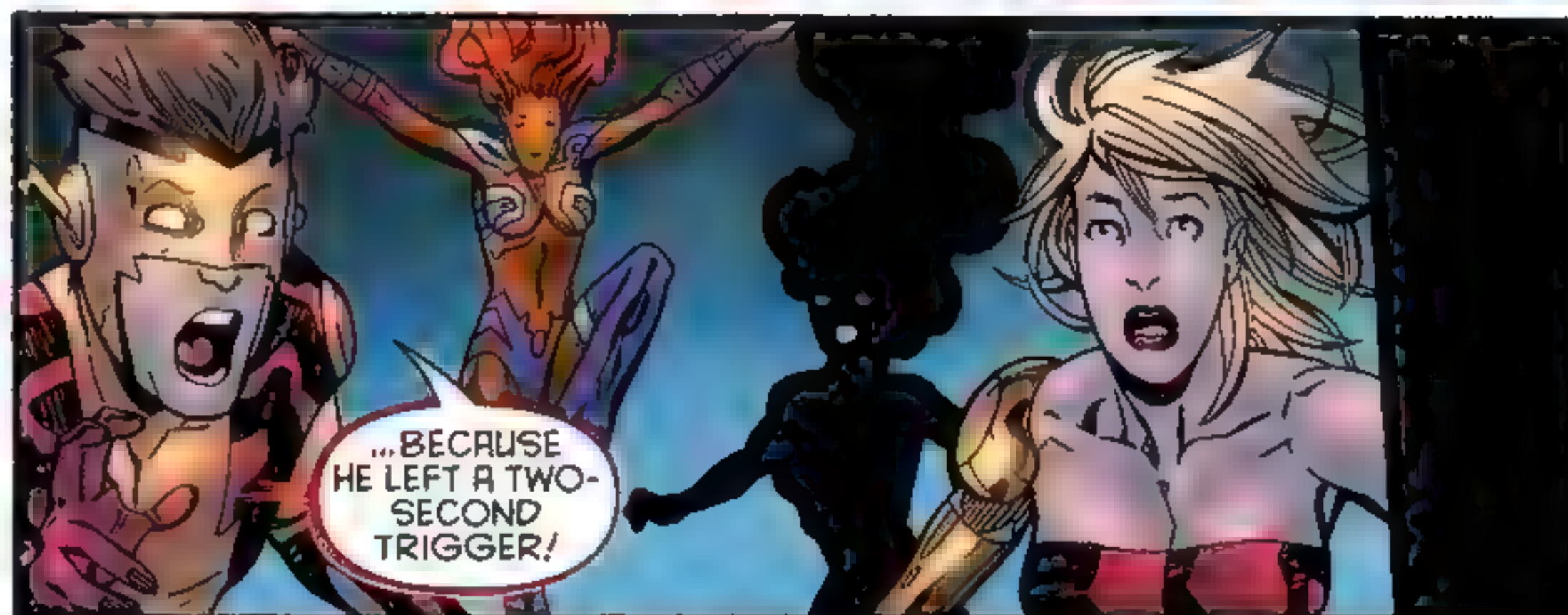
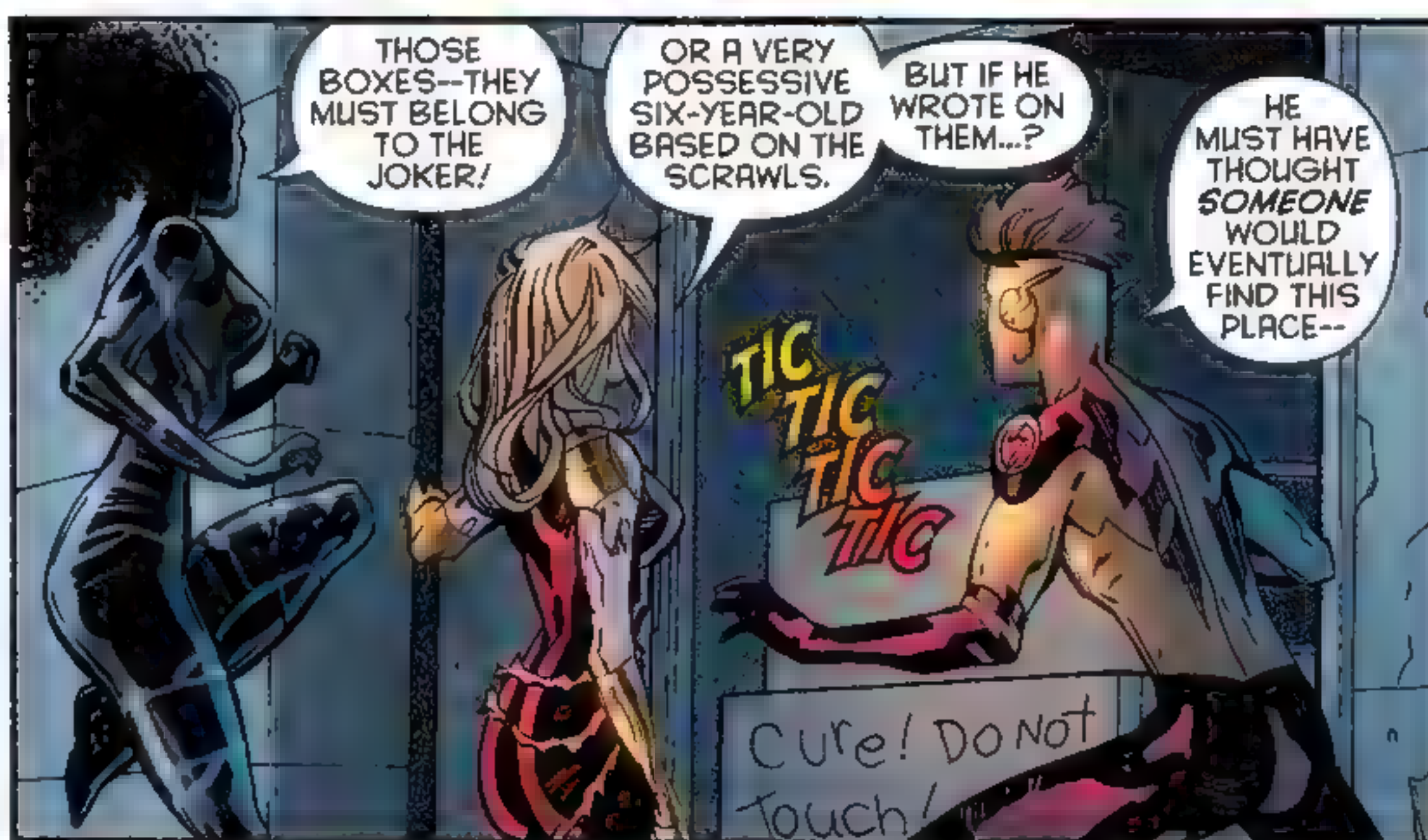
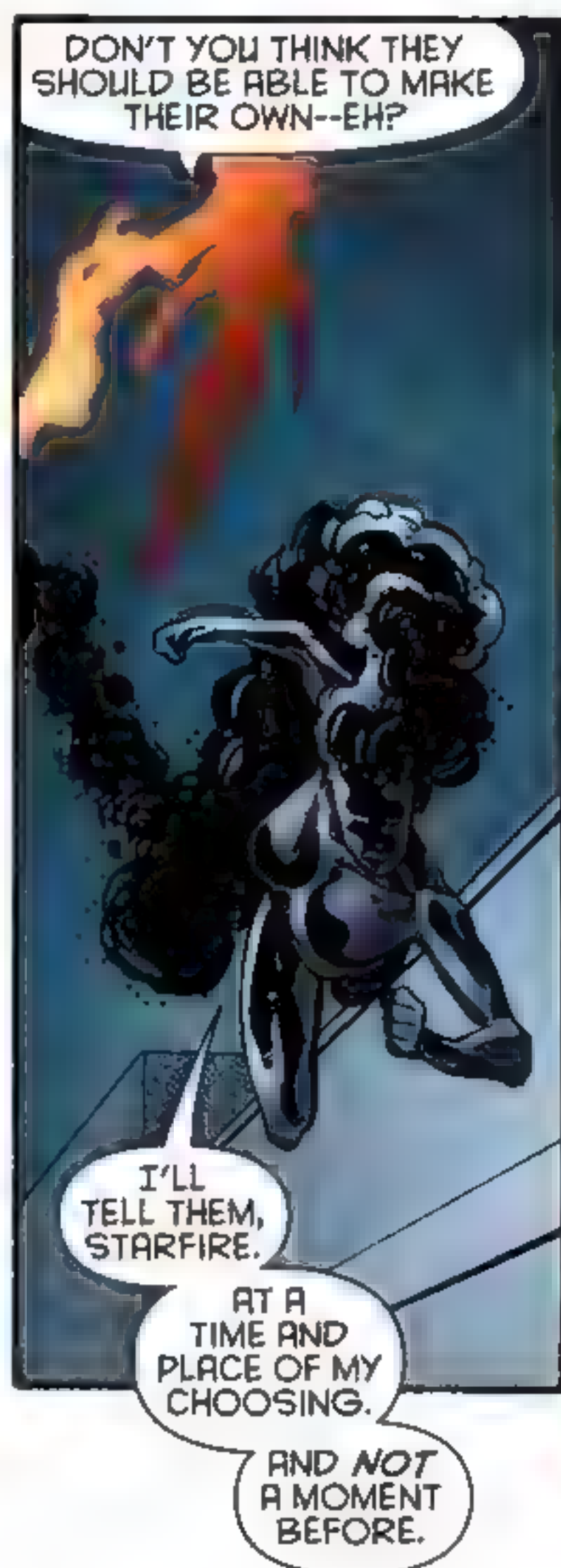
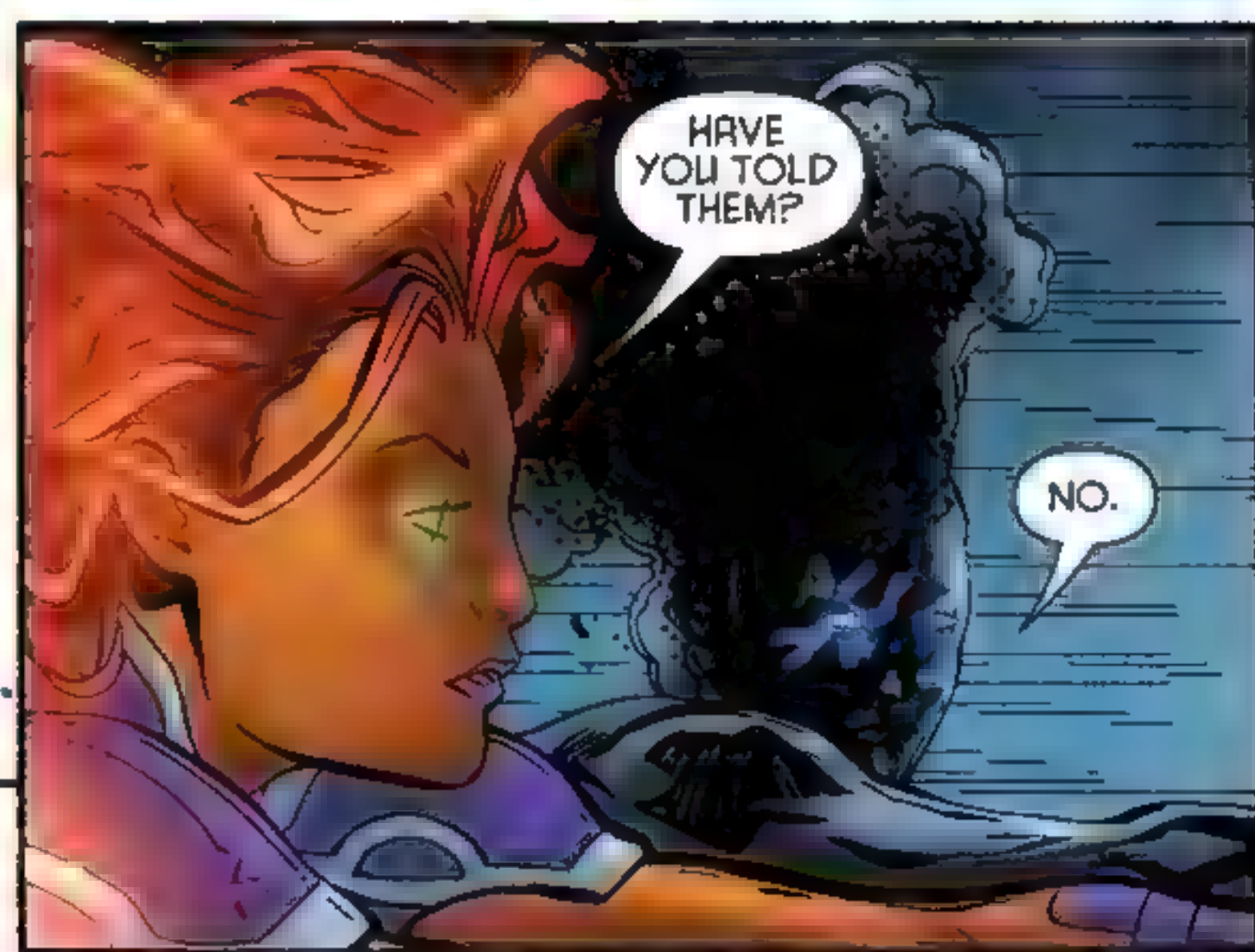


FOR A
GUY IN A
TRUCKER
HAT--

--YOU ARE
CLEARLY A LOT
SMARTER THAN
YOU LOOK.

UM.
THANKS?







FULL
DISCLOSURE!

I'VE HAD
THIS DREAM
EVERY NIGHT
SINCE I WAS
TWELVE.

BUT,
YOU KNOW--
WITHOUT THE
EXPLOSION.

OR THE
COSTUMES.

BA-BA-
BOOM



DAMMIT,
WE WERE SO
CLOSE!

THOSE
CRATES WERE
OUR ONLY SHOT AT
A CURE FOR THOSE
PEOPLE!

THERE IS
ALWAYS THE
POSSIBILITY THE
TECHNOLOGY ON
OUR SHIP CAN
SYNTHESIZE AN
ALTERNATIVE.

AS THIS
SOLUTION IS
LOST TO US
FOREVER.



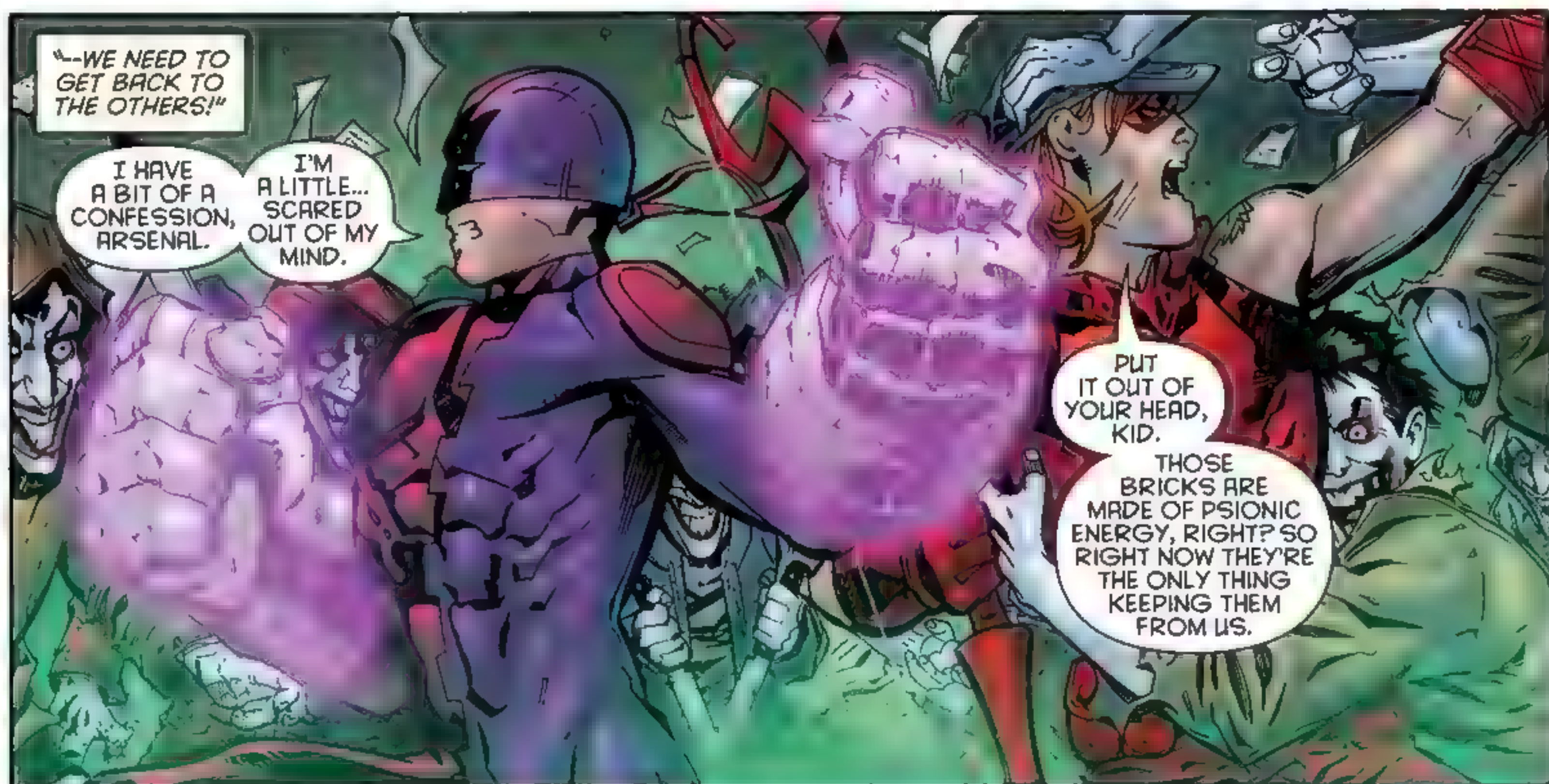
WHEN
YOU'RE AS
FAST AS
I AM--

--"FOREVER"
IS A RELATIVE
TERM.

YOU--?!

YOU
UNLOADED
ALL THOSE
CRATES OF
SERUM EVEN
BEFORE YOU
SAVED
US?!

HUG
HIM LATER,
FOR BOTH OF
US! RIGHT
NOW--



--WE NEED TO
GET BACK TO
THE OTHERS!"

I HAVE
A BIT OF A
CONFESSION,
ARSENAL.

I'M
A LITTLE...
SCARED
OUT OF MY
MIND.

PUT
IT OUT OF
YOUR HEAD,
KID.

THOSE
BRICKS ARE
MADE OF PSIONIC
ENERGY, RIGHT? SO
RIGHT NOW THEY'RE
THE ONLY THING
KEEPING THEM
FROM US.



A BOW?!
SERIOUSLY?!

YOU'VE
TAKEN TO
SWINGING
A BOW?!

I'M OUT OF
ARROWS.

HERE IN THE
STATES WE CALL THIS
"IMPROVISING."

SWING



DON'T YOU USE
THOSE THINGS FOR
ANYTHING MORE
THAN PUNCHING?

OF COURSE!
WHAT DO YOU
THINK I--



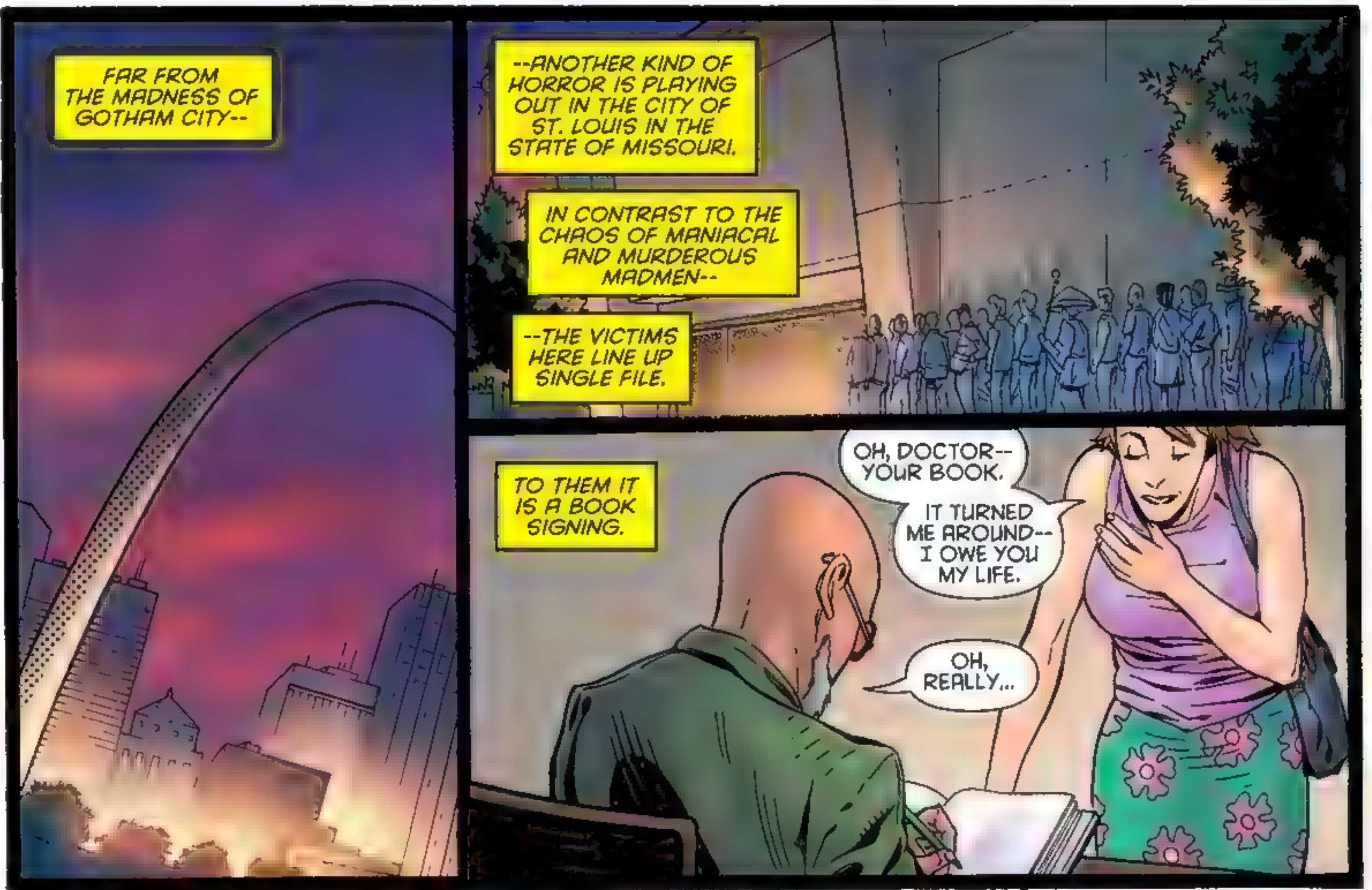
--I JUST HIT
PEOPLE?

OH.

YOU'RE
RIGHT...I
NEED TO
FOCUS.

I NEED
TO NOT
COME FROM
A PLACE OF
FEAR.





FAR FROM
THE MADNESS OF
GOTHAM CITY--

--ANOTHER KIND OF
HORROR IS PLAYING
OUT IN THE CITY OF
ST. LOUIS IN THE
STATE OF MISSOURI.

IN CONTRAST TO THE
CHAOS OF MANIACAL
AND MURDEROUS
MADMEN--

--THE VICTIMS
HERE LINE UP
SINGLE FILE.

TO THEM IT
IS A BOOK
SIGNING.

OH, DOCTOR--
YOUR BOOK.

IT TURNED
ME AROUND--
I OWE YOU
MY LIFE.

OH,
REALLY...

BUT TO THIS
AUTHOR, IT IS AN
OPPORTUNITY.

THAT'S
GOOD TO
KNOW.

PERHAPS
SOME DAY
I'LL HAVE TO
STOP BY...AND
COLLECT
IT.

A CHANCE TO
LOOK INTO THE
EYE OF THE
HOPELESS, THE
FOOLISH.

A CHANCE TO
LOOK THEM DIRECTLY
IN THE EYES AND
TELL THEM THEIR
FATE FROM BEHIND
HIS EMPTY SMILE.

HIS NAME IS
DR. HUGO
STRANGE.

WHAT'S SO
STRANGE
ABOUT
BEING
HAPPY?

BY
DR. HUGO
STRANGE.

IT HAS NEVER
BEEN ENOUGH FOR
THE MAN TO DEVOUR
HIS VICTIMS.

HE HAS
ALWAYS
NEEDED TO
TOY WITH
THEM.

TO
SAVOR
THEM.

DIDN'T REALLY
THINK...THIS IS HOW I WAS
GOING...TO DIE.

SHUSH.

NO ONE
IS GOING TO
DIE TODAY.

WE HAVE
RETURNED WITH
ENOUGH SERUM
TO ADMINISTER
TO EVERYONE.

**¡GRACIAS
HA DIOS!**

BUT
I DON'T
UNDERSTAND
WHY JOKER
WOULD HAVE
MADE IT SO
RELATIVELY
EASY TO
FIND?

BECAUSE
HE'S YANKING
OUR LEASH.

HE'S TRYING TO KEEP US BUSY.

LET'S
NOT GET TOO
EXCITED!

WE DON'T
EVEN KNOW
IF THIS WILL
WORK.

**BUT YOU
HELPED.**

HAS ANYONE
NOTICED...?

THESE
PEOPLE ARE
GETTING WORSE--
MORE MANIC?

LET'S SEE
WHAT WE'RE
LOOKING AT
HERE...

HOW LONG IT
WILL TAKE TO MIX
UP THIS CURE.

WLP!

WRRIP

THANK YOU,
MRS. HARPER!

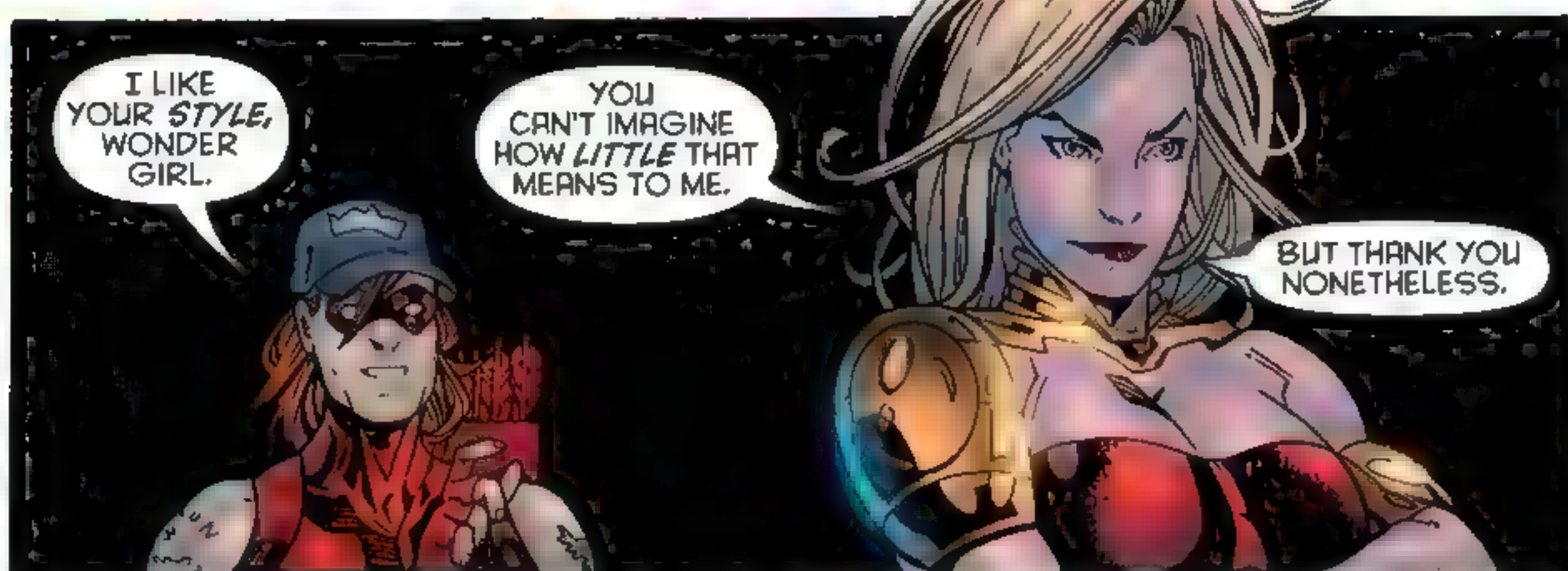
SYRINGES!

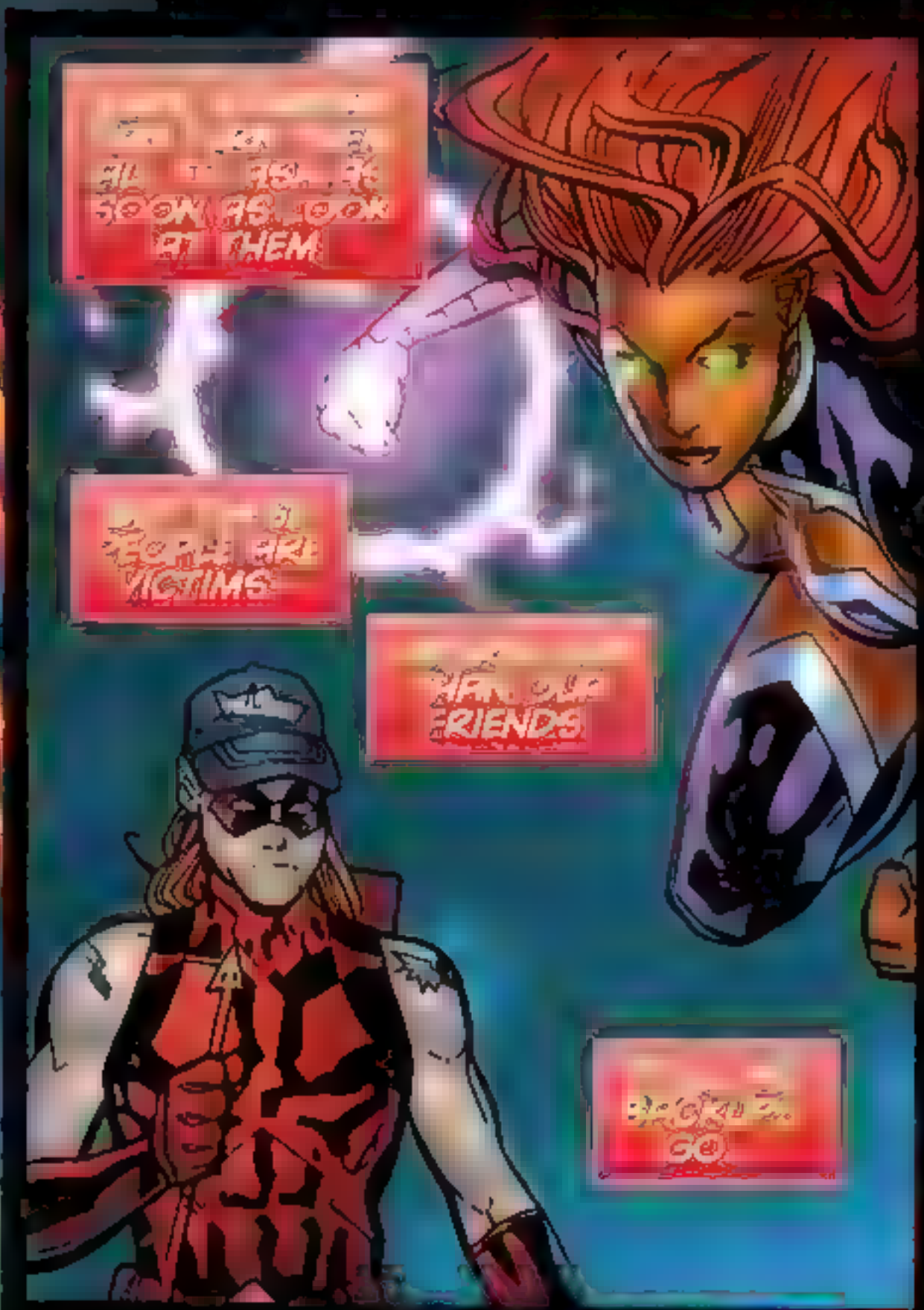
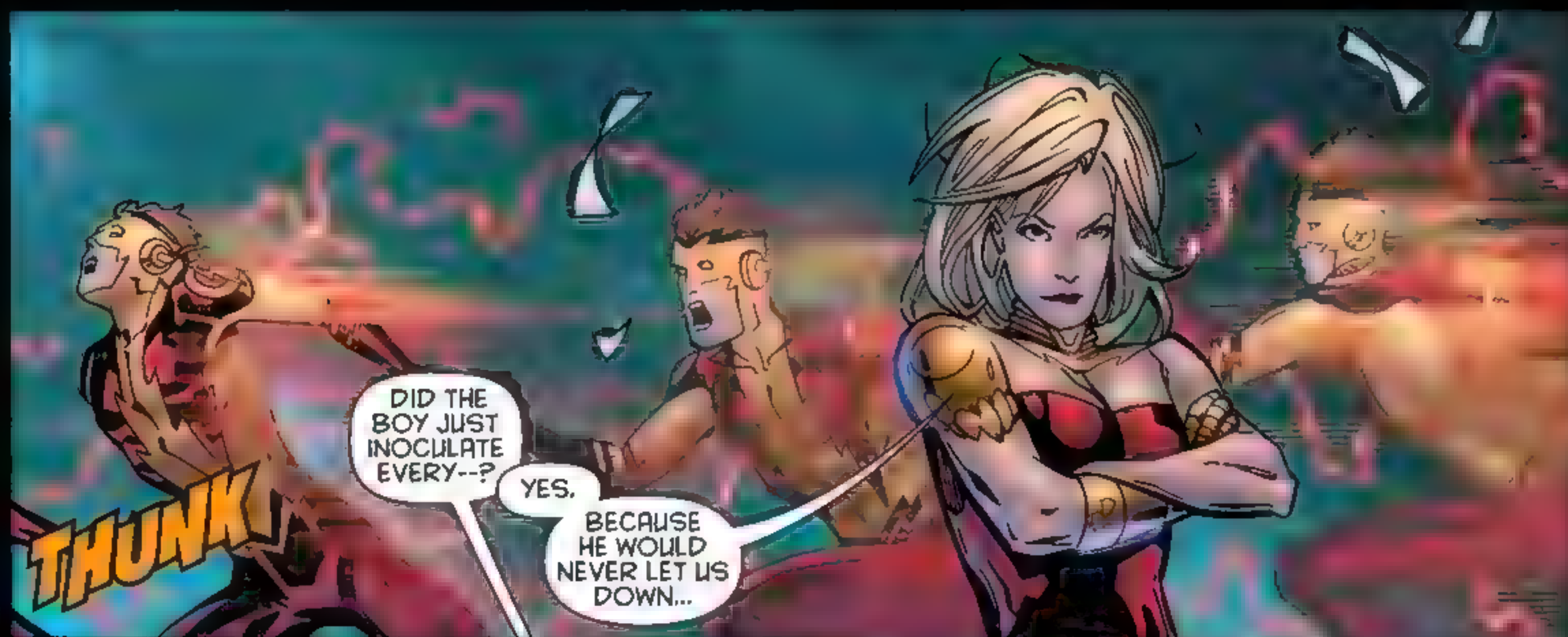
THAT CRAZY
CLOWN HAD ALL OF
THESE PRE-DOSED--WAS
PROBABLY GOING TO USE
THEM TO HOLD THE CITY
HOSTAGE AT SOME
POINT!

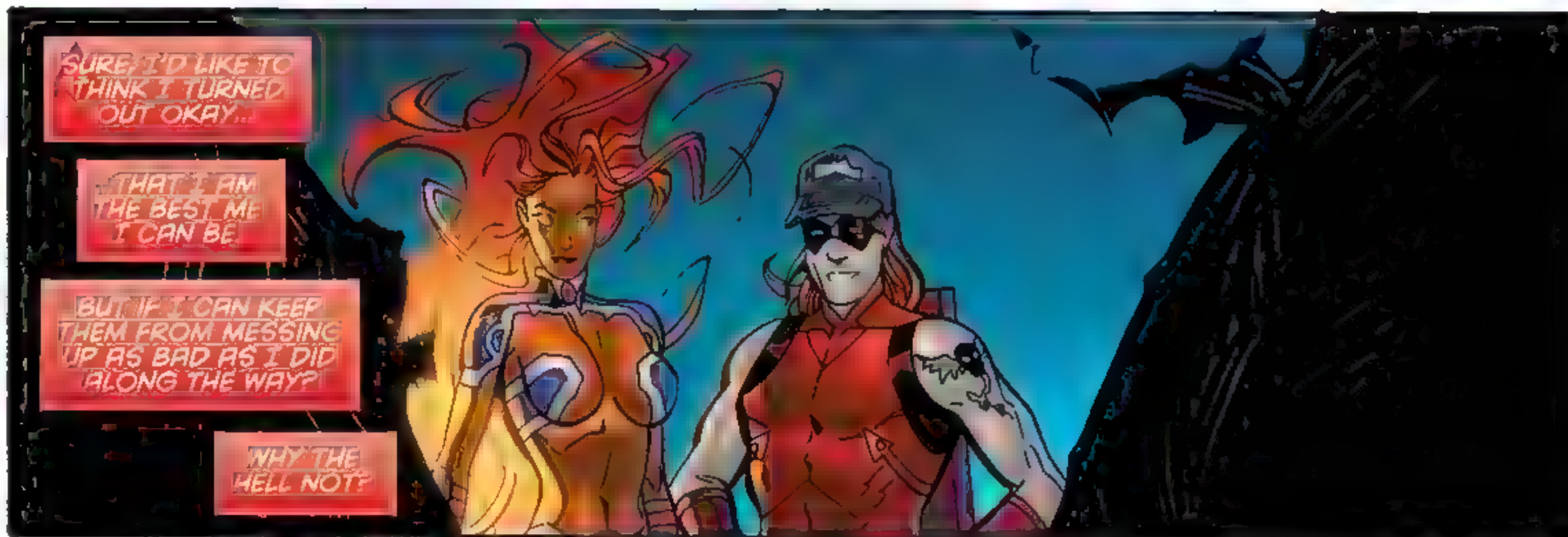
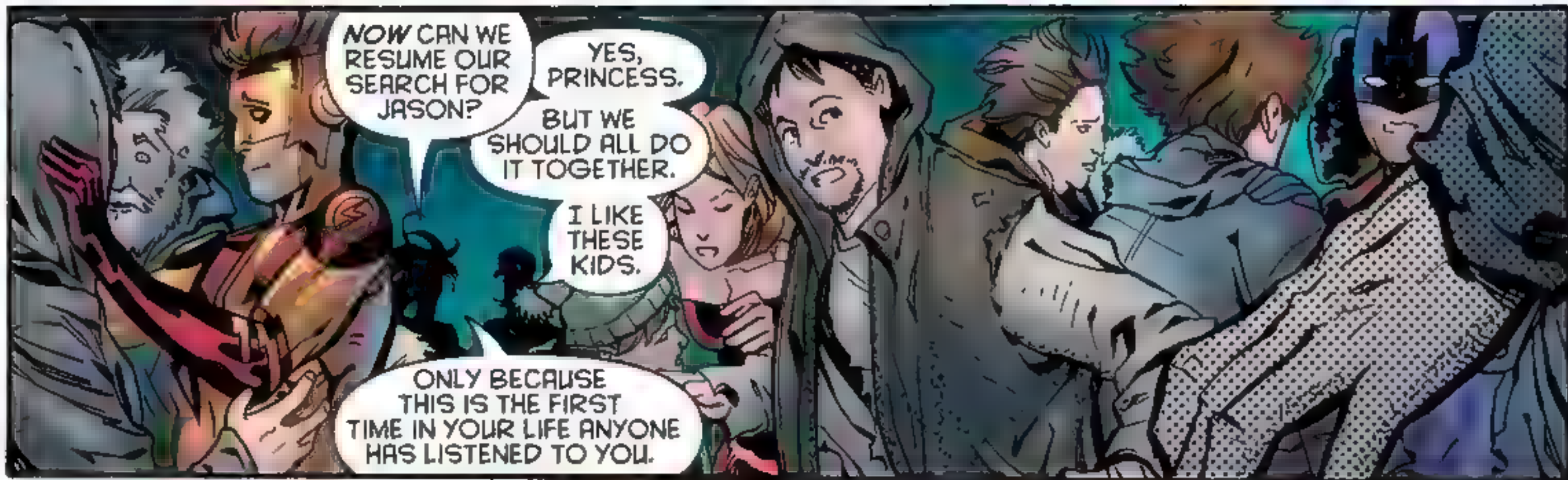
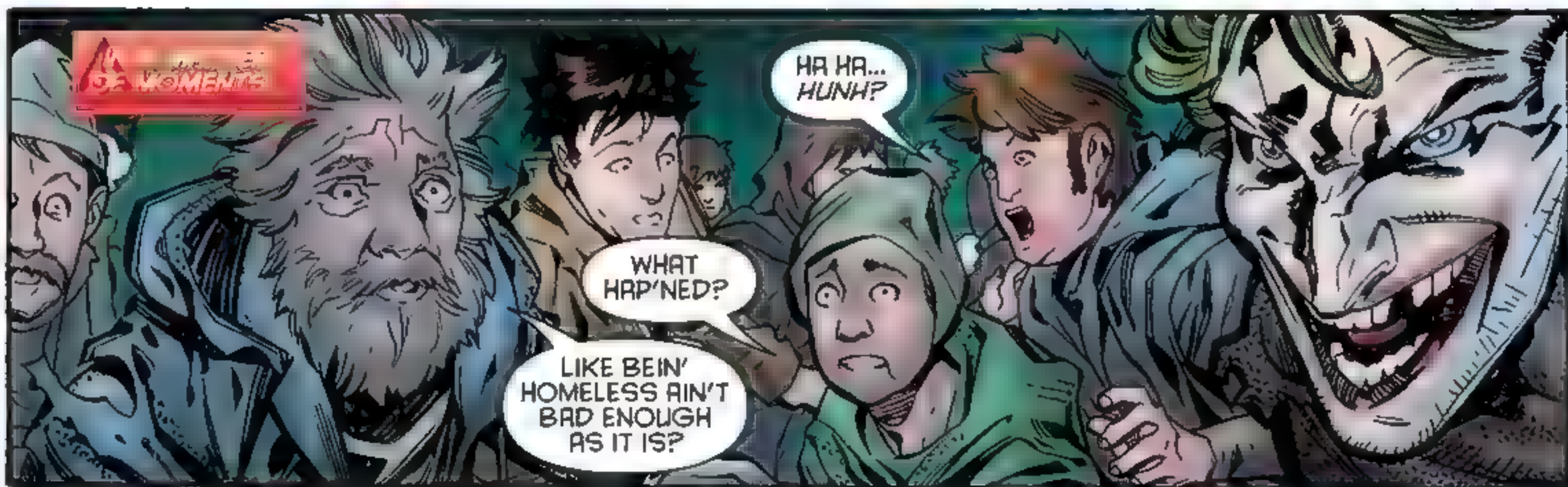
URP.

DIDN'T KNOW...
W'SNEEDLES.

HATE
NEEDLES.







ELSEWHERE...

THE MAN KNOWN AS

**DEATH
STROKE**

I'M AN
ASSASSIN.

THE
BEST.

TING

THAT MEANS I
GET PAID--LOTS
OF MONEY--TO
KILL PEOPLE.

FWIP

FWIP

FWIP

BUT EVERY ONCE
IN A BLUE MOON I
LEARN ABOUT AN
ASSIGNMENT...

... THAT I'M MORE
THAN WILLING TO
DO FOR FREE.

THUNK

THUNK

THUNK

Joe is shown from the back, working in his workshop. He is wearing a blue jacket and a red hood. The workshop is dimly lit, with a warm glow from a light source. On the wall behind him, several tools are hanging on a rack.

OH MY HOODNESS...

AREN'T YOU IN FOR A SURPRISE!

Joe is shown in a close-up, working on a mask. He is using a tool to shape the material. The mask is glowing with a red light.

SURE, IT TAKES A LITTLE EXTRA WORK.

BUT YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN WORTH THE EFFORT.

Joe is shown holding a glowing mask. He is looking at it with a satisfied expression. The mask is glowing with a red light.

HAUH! PERFECT!

Joe is shown holding a glowing mask. He is looking at it with a satisfied expression. The mask is glowing with a red light.

TEEHEE!

A FACE ONLY A MOTHER COULD LOVE.

Joe is shown holding a glowing mask. He is looking at it with a satisfied expression. The mask is glowing with a red light.

KLIK

IN TWO WEEKS:
RED HOOD V. RED ROBIN
IN TEEN TITANS #16!

AND YOU MUST NOT MISS THE NEXT ISSUE
WHEN WE PUT THE RED IN RED HOOD!



SOMEWHERE IN
GOTHAM CITY

PEOPLE ARE
SCREAMING

I CAN HEAR THEM
THROUGH THE
DRUG HAZE

CAN'T OPEN MY
EYES. LIPS FEEL
LIKE PILLOWS

THE JOKER DID
THIS. HE'S DOING
ALL OF THIS

TRYING TO MAKE BATMAN
STRONGER BY BREAKING
HIS FAMILY.

NIGHTWING, BATGIRL,
CATWOMAN, ALFRED,
BRUCE WAYNE, AND
ME, RED ROBIN—ALL
TARGETED FOR DEATH

DEATH OF THE FAMILY

GOTHAM RUNS RED!

PLOT: SCOTT LOBDELL DIALOGUE: FABIAN NICIEZA PENCILS: BRETT BOOTH
INKS: NORM RAPMUND COLORS: ANDREW DALHOUSE LETTERS: DAVE SHARPE
COVER: BOOTH & RAPMUND WITH DALHOUSE ASSISTANT EDITOR: DARREN SHAN EDITOR: EDDIE BERGANZA

MORE DISCONCERTING
THAN THE SOUND OF THE
SCREAMS?

THE MUFFLED BREATHING
SIX INCHES IN FRONT OF ME

THE SLIGHTEST HINT OF
AN ECHO, NOT A COWL

NOT A
MASK

THE SMELL OF CORDITE
AND POLISH USED ON A GUN

RED HOOD,
JASON TODD

MAYBE THE PERSON WHO
HAS COME CLOSEST TO
BEING AN ACTUAL BROTHER
IN MY ENTIRE LIFE

TWO OUTSIDERS IN THE WORLD'S
MOST EXCLUSIVE BOYS' CLUB

THE ROBINS, RED
OR OTHERWISE

FORMER
"SIDEKICKS"
TO BATMAN

JASON AND I HAVEN'T TALKED A
LOT SINCE HE CAME BACK FROM
THE DEAD AND WENT THROUGH A
WHOLE VENGEANCE THING

BUT I CAN
TELL YOU THIS


IF I HAVE TO
GO UP AGAINST
THE JOKER?

THERE'S NO ONE ELSE
I'D WANT BY MY SIDE

HE-LO?
EVERYONE
DECENT?

I CERTAINLY
HOPE NOT...

ASSUMING WE
LIVE THAT LONG



≡PISH POSH≡
HOW CAN YOU
BOTH STILL BE
UNCONSCIOUS?

THEY JUST
DON'T BUILD
BAT-BRATS
LIKE THEY
USED TO.

WHICH IS
WHY, I GUESS,
WE'RE GOING
TO HAVE TO LOOK
UNDER THE HOOD
AND SEE WHAT
NEEDS TO BE
FIXED.

"UNDER
THE HOOD."
HONESTLY,
NO PUN
INTENDED!

AH,
"RED HOOD"?
WHERE DO YOU
KIDS COME UP
WITH THESE
NAMES?

I GUESS IT'S
WRONG TO EXPECT
SOME ORIGINALITY
FROM YOU THOUGH,
EH...?

...CONSIDERING
YOU ALREADY STOLE
DEATH FROM ME!
WAS COMING BACK TO
LIFE WORTH IT,
REALLY?

WHAT HAVE
YOU FOUND BESIDES
REJECTION, LONLINESS
AND WHAT HAS TO BE
A MASK THAT SIMPLY
MUST FOG UP EVERY
TIME IT RAINS?

AS FOR THIS
ONE... SUCH A BRILLIANT
MIND--SO ORDERED,
SO RIGID. ≡UGH≡

IMAGINE WHAT
IT COULD DO IF IT
WAS AS FREE AS
MY OWN?

IT'S SO
DISTASTEFUL.
WHAT I HAVE
TO DO...

LITTLE
MORE THAN
CHILDREN YOU
ARE...

...

WHO AM I
KIDDING?!

THIS IS
GOING TO BE
AWF-
INSPIRING!

HAH.

AH.

HAH.

...

WHY AM I
ALWAYS AT MY
FUNNIEST FOR
AN AUDIENCE
OF ONE?

NOW
THAT I'VE
SUFFICIENTLY
WARMED UP THE
AUDIENCE...

SHWUSHH

...IT'S
TIME FOR THE
HEADLINER!

HMMM,
WHICH BUTTON
OPERATES THE
SPOTLIGHT
AGAIN?!

KLIK

WHOOOPS!

FWOOOSH

AAH!

THTHPP!

RED.

RED.

SORRY YOU GOT DRAGGED INTO THIS. THAT PASTY-FACED FREAK HAS MADE THIS PERSONAL*--

--AND NO WAY IS HE LEAVING THIS PLACE ALIVE.

THIS IS GOING TO COME AS A SHOCK...BUT THIS ISN'T ABOUT YOU, RED HOOD.

NOT ENTIRELY.

LET HIM PUSH YOUR BUTTONS? LET HIM UNDER YOUR SKIN?

WE BOTH LOSE.

YOU GOT A PLAN?

PFPT.

WHEN DON'T I HAVE A PLAN?

*SEE RED HOOD #15! --ED.

FACE FRONT, REDS!

OR BETTER YET--TURN AROUND FOR YOUR SUPER SPECIAL SECRET SURPRISE!

IS THAT?

HAW HA!

I KILL MYSELF!

OR SOMEONE... ANYONE!

NO!

IT CAN'T
BE THEM...



DADDIES
DEAREST!

I JUST
LOOOOVE A FAMILY
REUNION--DON'T
YOU--?

MEANWHILE...

SO, ARSENAL
ISN'T THE MORON
HE'S MADE OUT
TO BE.

OH, NO, I
TOTALLY AM,
WONDER
GIRL.

SO WHAT
DOES IT MEAN
THAT I JUST FIGURED
OUT HOW THE TEEN
TITANS AND THE
OUTLAWS COULD CURE
EVERYONE POISONED
BY THE JOKER
TOXIN*...?

*RED HOOD AND THE
OUTLAWS #16. --EDDIE

I THINK IT
MEANS...BATGIRL
WAS RIGHT...THE
TITANS WEREN'T
READY FOR THIS
CITY...

...CAN'T BELIEVE
I'M ADMITTING THIS...
WE WOULDN'T HAVE
KNOWN HOW TO HELP
THESE PEOPLE...

WE
WOULD HAVE
DONE WHAT WE
COULD...WE
WOULD HAVE
TRIED OUR
BEST...

WHY ARE
YOU SO SKITTISH,
SOLSTICE?

I--I AM FINE--
JUST--UPSET BY
ALL OF THIS...

WELL, *ALL
OF THIS* HAS JUST
STARTED. C'MON, WE
GOT MORE WORK
TO DO...

MY POWER
SURGED--SO DID
KID FLASH'S. THAT
MEANS MY MYSTERIOUS
"FRIEND" LANCE IS
AROUND*.

COME.

RIGHT
BEHIND YOU,
STARFIRE.

WHO IS LANCE...
AND WHY IS HE SO
INTERESTED IN THE
TITANS?

*SEE LAST ISSUE.
--FOOTNOTE
FANATIC EDDIE

NEARBY...

THE KIDS
MANAGED TO
HANDLE THE
JOKER-VIRUS
OUTBREAK...

...WITH A
LITTLE **POWER
BOOST** I
PROVIDED.

WALLER'S
INSTINCTS
WERE
RIGHT...

...THE TITANS
COULD PROVE
USEFUL IF...

→URK←

BASILISK HAS
HAD ENOUGH OF
YOUR INVOLVEMENT,
LANCE!

OUR
ORGANIZATION
WILL CLAIM THE
TITANS.

→GGNN←

WRONG.

SORRY, GRAY LORA...IS IT?
DIDN'T YOU KNOW MY TELE-
KINETIC AUGMENT...

...CAN NOT
ONLY BOOST
POWERS...BUT
SHUT THEM
DOWN?

AS
WELL AS
"READ"
YOU, BUT
WHY ALL THE
ATTENTION
ON THE
TITA--!

FACHOW!

SORRY, SOLDIER,
BUT DIDN'T YOU KNOW
WE WOULD NEVER SEND
AN AGENT INTO THE
FIELD ALONE...?

THAT'S A
WRAP!
THANKS

ELSEWHERE...PERHAPS ELSEWHEN...

HE
CALLS
ALL TO
COURT!

HE
PLANS
TO
SPEAK!

HAVE WE
DISPLEASED
HIM?

THEY
SAY SHE IS
READY!

LORD TRIGON
IS MOST PLEASED
TO PRESENT A DAY
LONG IN THE
MAKING!

SHE WAS LOST
TO ME, BUT SHE
FOUND HER WAY
HOME*.

MUCH CARE
HAS BEEN TAKEN
IN PREPARING
HER FOR OUR
DELIVERANCE!

SHE POINTS
TO THE FUTURE, OUR
SPEARHEAD IN AN ATTACK
LONG IN THE MAKING AND
SO VERY SOON TO
COME!

I UNLEASH
UPON A FEARFUL
EARTH, IN ALL HER
VICIOUS GLORY,
MY DAUGHTER--

--MY
BLACK BIRD OF
TERROR...

RAVEN!

*WHO SAW THIS
COMING SINCE
PHANTOM
STRANGER #1?
--SNEAKY EDDIE

I RUN THROUGH ALL
THE POSSIBILITIES
IN RAPID FASHION...

HOW DID HE
FIND THEM?
HOW DID HE
BRING THEM HERE?
HOW COULD HE
HAVE EVEN KNOWN?

AND THE ANSWER
BECOMES OBVIOUS

HE'S THE
JOKER

NOW
NORMALLY,
I WOULDN'T NEED
TO SPELL THIS OUT,
BUT THE ONE TO MY
LEFT HERE IS A LIT-
TELL S-L-O-W,
SO...

I GOT RED
ROBIN'S DADDY AND
I GOT RED HOOD'S
DADDY AND SOME RED
IS GOING TO SPILL
OUT OF ONE OF
THEM.

YOU TWO GET
TO DECIDE WHO
THE BLEEDER'S
GONNA BE BY
BEING THE ONE WHO
SURVIVES.

YOU REALLY
THINK THIS OLD
TRICK IS GOING
TO WORK?

OF
COURSE!

DO YOU HAVE
ANY IDEA HOW
MUCH MONEY I SPENT
BUYING THAT CHAIN
FROM HOME
REPO?!

YOU THINK
WE'RE GOING TO
FIGHT EACH OTHER
TO THE DEATH
FOR YOUR
ENTERTAINMENT?

YOU'RE
EVEN CRAZIER
THAN YOU--

KLIK

AND YOU
WONDER WHY
I'M YOUR ONLY
FRIEND?

SHOULDN'T BE SURPRISED
JASON HAS DOG-CAR BRAIN.

DRIVE HIS FATHER BEING
ALIVE PAST HIM AND HE'LL
CHASE IT DOWN.

--WITHOUT A CLUE WHAT
HE'D DO IF HE CAUGHT IT.

AND THE JOKER
KNOWS THAT.

JUST LIKE I
KNOW THE
JOKER.

KAK

WE DON'T
NEED TO DO
THIS!

IF WE WORK
TOGETHER--

--THEN HE
KILLS THEM
BOTH?

WHY RISK
MY FATHER'S
LIFE?

OOOH-
HOOO! THIS
IS CAIN VS. ABEL!
KIRK VS. THE GORN!
IT'S "I" VS.
"E"--EXCEPT
AFTER "C"!

YEAH...IF THAT
WERE THE CASE,
YOU WOULDN'T
HAVE BEEN DUMB
ENOUGH...

--I CAN'T
TAKE ANY
CHANCES...

YOUR
FATHER *DIED*
IN PRISON!

AND JOKER'S
THE PSYCHO WHO
BROUGHT MY MOM
"BACK FROM THE
DEAD"--

--SO
SORRY--

FASH!



...TO UNDER-ESTIMATE ME!

SAYS THE IDIOT WHO FORGOT ABOUT JASON'S ALL-CASTE TRAINING

FIGHTING BLIND IS NO IMPEDIMENT FOR HIM

SON OF A

I HIT HARDER

BUT HE HITS MORE OFTEN

AND HE'S TOO STUBBORN TO GET SNOOKED OUT.

WHICH MEANS I'LL HAVE TO PLAY DIRTY.

TRIGGER THE PIEZOELECTRIC FABRIC SUBSTRATES AND MY GLIDER WING OPS.

BECOME BLADES.

SHYEEEEK

I COULD KILL YOU RIGHT NOW AND YOU'D HAVE NO IDEA...

...WHY SOMETHING YOU THINK IS SO EASY TO DO... IS SO HARD FOR ME...

FIND YOUR WAY TO THAT LOVELY, LOVELY PLACE, BOY...

...OR I WILL KILL BOTH MEN NOW.

CAN I DO THIS?

KILL A KILLER TO PROTECT TWO INNOCENT PEOPLE?

JOKER'S MISTAKE WAS IN THINKING I'D TAKE HIS BAIT AT ALL.

SEE... I KNOW HIM... AND THE ONLY WAY TO BEAT JOKER AT HIS OWN GAME...

...IS BY
REFUSING
TO PLAY
BY HIS RULES!

HOOD--
NOW!!



TO HIS CREDIT, JASON PICKS
UP ON MY LEAD AS IF WE'D BEEN
WORKING TOGETHER FOR YEARS



DAMN, BUT IF THE
TOOL DOESN'T MOVE
LIKE LIQUID SILK

KA-POW
KA-POW
KA-POW



≡GUD?

I SHOULD BE APPALLED
RIGHT NOW. DISGUSTED

HE HAD OTHER OPTIONS
FOR PUTTING THE JOKER
DOWN WITHOUT KILLING HIM.

BUT A PART OF ME IS
ALMOST RELIEVED THAT
SOMEONE LIKE RED HOOD--

--CAN DO THE
THINGS WE SHOULDN'T
DO. WON'T DO

→PHEW← ANY-
THING WITH THAT
MANY HOLES SHOULD
COME WITH ITS OWN
GROUNDSKEEPER.

HOW'D
YOU KNOW THEY
WEREN'T OUR
FATHERS...?

THE "MAN"
THAT JOKER
CLAIMED WAS MY
FATHER?

THE
DISCOLORATION
ON HIS WRIST WOULD
HAVE BEEN A SCAR
AT LEAST FOUR
YEARS OLD.

SINCE I KEEP
A VERY CLOSE EYE
ON MY PARENTS--* I
WOULD HAVE KNOWN
ABOUT THAT.

WHICH
MADE ME
WATCH "THEIR"
ACTIONS MORE
CLOSELY...

ONLY
YOU.

YOU REALIZE,
OF COURSE, THE ONLY
REASON I DIDN'T KILL YOU
RIGHT OFF IS THAT I KNEW
YOUR BIG BRAIN WOULD
FIGURE SOME WAY
OUT OF THIS.

OH,
REALLY.

AND HERE I
OWED MY SURVIVAL
TO THE FACT THAT
I WAS--WAIT FOR
IT--KICKING YOUR
BUTT.

URK!

RED--HE'S
ALIVE?

*TEEN TITANS #8! WHAT
DID YOU THINK HE WAS
DOING IN THE BACK
OF THE LIMO? --ED.

**WORSE
THAN ALIVE!**

HE
KNEW I'D
TAKE THE
SHOT!

WHEN DID
HE REPLACE
HIS BODY
WITH--KAK!
KAK!

**TOO LATE FOR
JASON'S MASK
IS CRACKED.
BOTH OF US ARE**





WHISTLE
WHILE YOU WORK,
BATMAN IS A
JERK...

PUT
ON THAT GRIN
AND DIG RIGHT
IN TO SCREAM
SO LOUD AND
LONG.

THE PROBLEM
IS THAT NEITHER ONE
OF YOU KNOWS HOW
TO DO AS YOU'RE
TOLD!

HE WOULD BE
SO DISAPPOINTED TO
SEE SUCH UNRULY
BEHAVIOR.

I'D PUNISH
YOU NOW, BUT THERE'S
STILL SO MUCH WORK TO
BE DONE BEFORE OUR
LITTLE FEAST.

WHY, THE MAIN
COURSE ALONE WILL
BE QUITE THE PIQUANT
LITTLE DISH.

BUT DON'T FRET.
SINCE YOUR HANDS
WILL BE TIED, I'LL BE
THE ONLY ONE ALLOWED
TO CARVE THE
MEAT...

≡HMM≡ FOR
YOUR SAKE, I DO
SO HOPE THE KNIVES
HAVE BEEN
SHARPENED...

TO BE CONCLUDED IN BATMAN #17
NEXT ISSUE: THE AFTERMATH!

THE FIRST
TIME WAS
FRIGHTENING,
WASN'T IT?

WWW...
WHH.

IT'S OKAY. IT
WAS SCARY FOR
ME, TOO!

WHERE...

SHHHH.
YOU'RE
SAFE.

LOOK! LOOK!
HERE IT COMES,
SEEEEEE?

JOKER...

YESSS, DARLING.
JOKER IS HERE WITH
YOU IN THE DARK. WE'RE
WATCHING IT COME FOR YOU,
AS I'M SURE IT DID
THAT FIRST TIME.

OOHHH...
IT WANTSSSS
YOU! WANTS
YOU BAD!

JOKER,
LISTEN
TO--

NO. THERE IS
NO REASONING WITH
IT... IT WAS THE SAME
FOR ME, WHEN I SAW IT
COMING... WHEN I SAW
YOU COMING. NO
REASONING!

STOP THIS!
NOW!

AND SO YOU CALLED
OUT THERE IN THE DARK!
EVEN THOUGH YOU KNEW YOU
WERE SEEING IT! YOUR FACE,
THE REAL BONE AND TOOTH
FACE BENEATH IT ALL.

JOKER!

YOU KNEW IT
IN YOUR SOUL, BUT
STILL YOU CALLED OUT TO
SOMEONE, ANYONE, TO
PULL YOU UP FROM
THE DARKNESS.

DC COMICS presents BATMAN in
DEATH OF THE FAMILY CONCLUSION

THE PUNCHLINE

SCOTT SNYDER writer GREG CAPULLO penciller
JONATHAN GLAPION inker

FED PLASCENCIA colorist RICHARD STARKINGS and
COMICRAFT'S JIMMY BETANCOURT lettering

CAPULLO & PLASCENCIA cover
TONY DANIEL, MATT BANNING & TOMER MOREY variant cover

KATIE KUBERT assoc. editor MIKE MARTY editor

BATMAN created by BOB KANE

TA-DAA!

DINNER IS
SERVED!

...AND
INTO THE
LIGHT.

MY
GOD...

OH, AND DON'T
WORRY, OLD FRIEND.
THEY'RE ALL FINE
AND DANDY.

MMNNFFF!

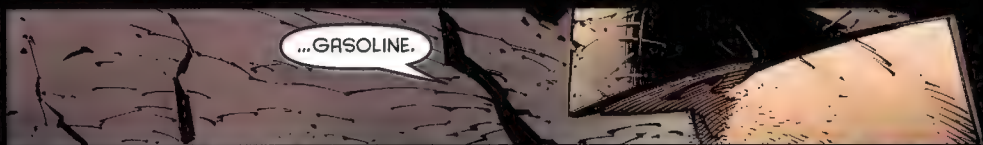
JUST BOUND
AND GAGGED, SILENT
LISTENERS AT THE TABLE.
I'VE KEPT THEM ENTERTAINED,
THOUGH. I'VE BEEN TALKING
TO THEM FOR HOURS, TELLING
THEM WHAT YOU REALLY
THINK OF THEM.

THEIR EARS
ARE BURNING!
TSSSS! OW,
HOT! HEE
HEE!

I'LL
DESTROY YOU
FOR THIS,
YOU--

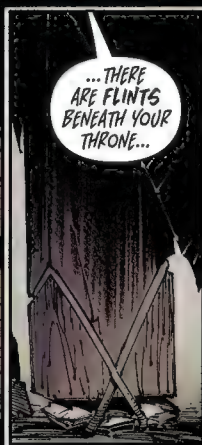
NOT SO
FAST, BATS!
I WOULDN'T GET
UP IF I WERE
YOU. AFTER
ALL...

...YOU SMELL
SOMETHING?



...GASOLINE.

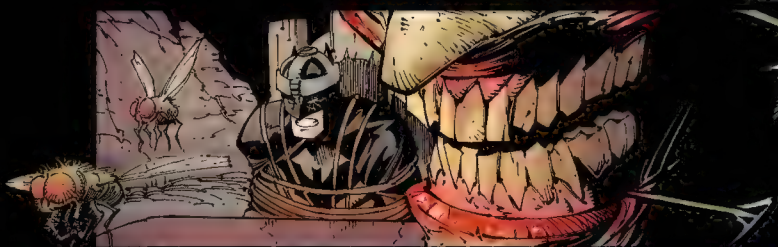
THAT'S
RIGHT. THEY'VE
BEEN ANOINTED AND
THEY AWAIT YOUR
JUDGMENT...



...THERE
ARE FLINTS
BENEATH YOUR
THRONE...



...AND
UNDER YOUR
TABLE, SIF.



SO AT ANY TIME DURING OUR MEAL,
SHOULD YOUR TRUE FEELINGS GET
THE BETTER OF YOU, SHOULD YOU
TIRE OF THEIR COMPANY...

...ALL YOU NEED
TO DO IS STAND,
LEAVE THE TABLE, AND
THEY WILL BURN
WITH SHAME.



NOW, THOUGH, IT'S TIME TO
EAT. TO FINALLY LIFT THE LID
ON THIS FAMILY DISH!

UUNNNN?

EARLIER, YOU
ASKED ABOUT OLD JEEVES.
MR. PENNYWORTH?



WHERE...
WHERE IS
HE?

OH, HE'S
AROUND, HEE HEE
HEEEEE!

AND READY
FOR SERVICE.
HAHAHA!



SEE?



HE'S
RIGHT HERE AND
JUST ITCHING
TO HELP!



ALFRED...
ALFRED, THANK
GOD.

MR. PENNYWORTH!
NOW THAT WE'RE ALL HERE,
WILL YOU DO THE HONORS
OF OPENING OUR GUESTS'
EYES TO THE FEAST
BEFORE THEM?



HAHAHAHA
HAHAHA...



MMNNN!



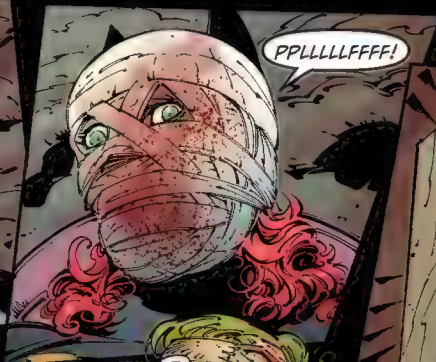
ALFRED,
LISTEN TO
ME...



NO, LISTEN
TO ME, ALFIE, OLD
BOY. GO ON NOW.
IT'S TIME...



HAHA
HAHAHA
HAHAHA
HA...

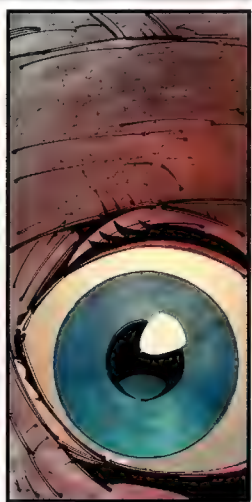
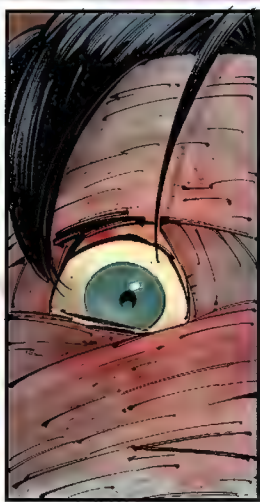
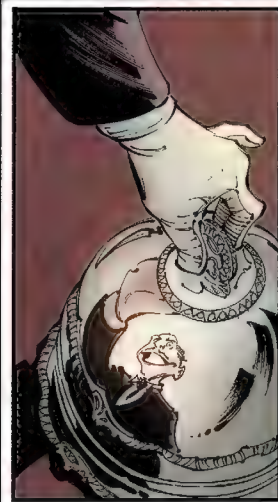


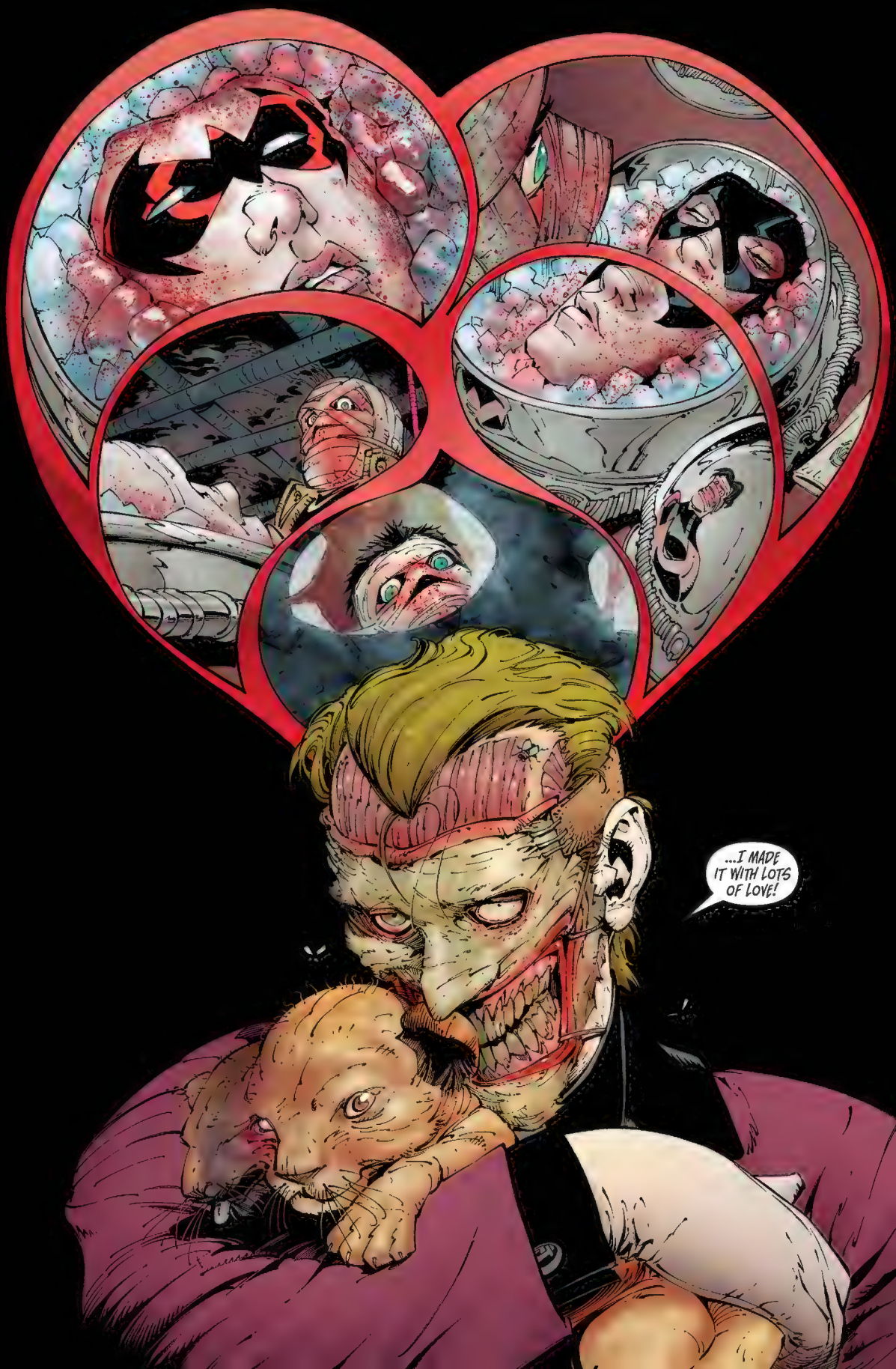
WHAT HAVE I DONE? I'VE SIMPLY DRESSED THEM FOR THE PARTY!

OR RATHER, UNDRESSED THEM. TAKEN OFF THE CLOTHES THAT HAVE BEEN INVISIBLE TO EVERYONE BUT YOU, MY KING.

EXP000000SED THEM.

AND SPEAKING OF EXPOSING, MR. PENNYWORTH, WOULD YOU SERVE US, PLEASEEEEEEE?





HOW
COULD
YOU?

HOW? IT WAS EASY, BATS!
JUST SLICE, PULL, CHILL AND SERVE!
A THIRTY MINUTE RECIPE! THEY COME
OFF SO EASILY, TOO. THERE'S NOTHING
BENEATH THESE PRETTY THINGS,
AFTER ALL. THEY'RE NOT LIKE
YOU AND ME, YOU SEE, NOT
UNDER THE SKIN.

THAT'S WHAT I'VE BEEN
TRYING TO TELL YOU! WHY I
DID THIS TO MY OWN SWEET
MUG. TO SHOW YOU...

...SHOW YOU THAT
BENEATH THESE FACES, WELL,
IT'S JUST SOFT, TENDER STUFF.
STUFF YOU COULD JUST POKE
YOUR FINGER THROUGH.

BENEATH MY GRIN, THOUGH,
IS JUST MORE GRIN! HA HA! AND
BENEATH THAT FACE OF YOURS IS
SOMETHING SNOUTED AND FANGED AND
LOVELY AND THAT'S WHAT THIS IS ABOUT.
REMINING YOU OF THE LOVE WE
SHARE, YOU AND I!

I HATE NOTHING
MORE ON THIS EARTH
THAN YOU, JOKER.
NOTHING.

HAHAHA! OH, I BEG TO DIFFER. IF THAT'S SO,
THEN WHY, PRAY TELL, HAVE YOU NEVER PEEKED
BEHIND MY CURTAIN, OH GREAT DETECTIVE?
NEVER EXPOSED ME, WHO I REALLY AM,
OR WAS, BEFORE MY BECOMING.

THERE'S
NEVER BEEN ANY
D.N.A. TO LINK
YOU TO--

TUT-TUT. NEVER MIND.
LET'S JUST CUT RIGHT TO
THE HEART OF IT, SHALL WE? THE
BLACK, SHRUNKEN HEART. BEAT-BEAT.
BEAT-BEAT. WHY HAVE YOU
NEVER KILLED ME?

BECAUSE
YOU'D...WIN.

HAHAHA! I LOVE THAT
ONE! WOO...RIGHT, BECAUSE
I'D WIN. NO, SEE, THIS... THIS
IS HOW I WIN, BATSSSS. I
WIN BY LIVING. BY KEEP ON
KEEPING ON.

WHAT YOU
JUST SAID--THAT
YOU DON'T DO IT BECAUSE
I'D WIN--THAT'S WHAT YOU TELL
YOURSELF. WHAT YOU TELL THEM,
BECAUSE YOU DON'T WANT TO
ADMIT THE TRUTH, THE BAD
NEWS OF YOUR OWN SOUL.

THAT AND THE
OLD SLIPPERY-SLOPE
EXCUSE, AM I RIGHT? YOU
KILL ME, AND SUDDENLY,
WHO KNOWS?! WHAT'S
STOPPING YOU FROM
KILLING ALL OF US
BADDIES FROM GOING
ON A DOWNRIGHT
SPREE?!



BUT I CALL GUANO THERE, OLD FRIEND. I MEAN, YOU REALLY THINK YOU COULDN'T KILL JUST ME, JOKER, AND STOP? NO ONE WOULD HAVE TO KNOW.

YOU COULD DO IT SOMEWHERE AWAY FROM PRYING EYESSSS, DOWN IN THE DARK, AND THEN YOU COULD BEAR THAT CROSS, COULDN'T YOU?

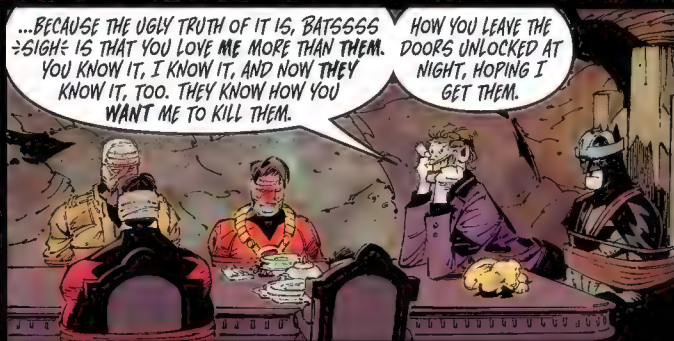
ALAS, POOR JOKER, I KNEW HIM AND SO ON?

NO.



AH, THAT'S YOUR STORY AND YOU'RE STICKING TO IT (HEE HEE). BUT THEN ANSWER ME THIS DITTY. HOW DID I KNOW? HOW DID I KNOW YOU'D NEVER TELL THEM ABOUT THIS?! ABOUT HOW I'D BEEN IN YOUR LITTLE H.Q.?

BECAUSE WE HAVE AN UNDERSTANDING. I'LL BET YOU'VE SAID IT TO THEM THESE PAST FEW DAYS, HAVEN'T YOU? "YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND HIM." SURE YOU HAVE...



...BECAUSE THE UGLY TRUTH OF IT IS, BATSSSSS SIGH: IS THAT YOU LOVE ME MORE THAN THEM. YOU KNOW IT, I KNOW IT, AND NOW THEY KNOW IT, TOO. THEY KNOW HOW YOU WANT ME TO KILL THEM.

HOW YOU LEAVE THE DOORS UNLOCKED AT NIGHT, HOPING I GET THEM.



HOPING I GET HIM.

AND HIM.

AND HIM (AGAIN).

AND HIM.

AND HER.



IN THE END, YOU'RE THE ONE WHO WROTE THIS FOR ME, DARLING...



...A LOVE
LETTER.
A BACKWARDS
MAP. A HIT
LIST...

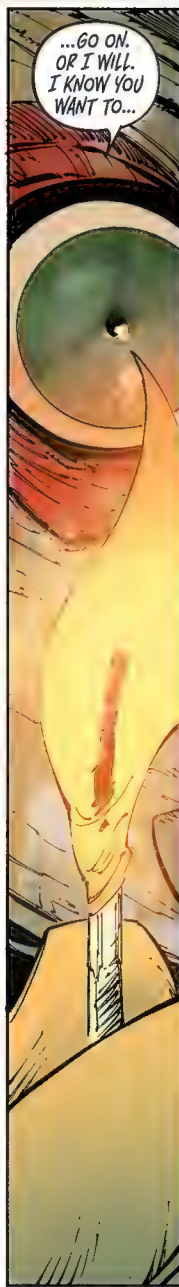
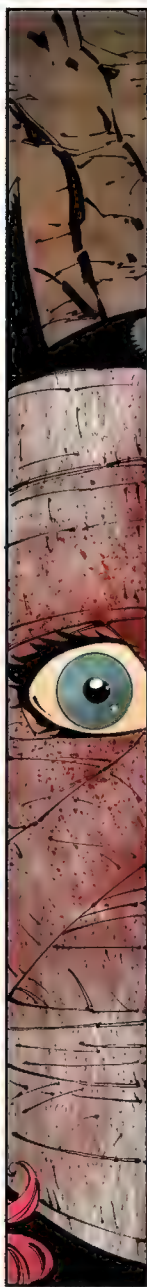


...AND SO, BATS, I DID IT
FOR YOU. I CARRIED OUT
YOUR ORDERS. AND NOW ALL
THAT'S LEFT FOR US TO DO,
YOU AND I, IS CELEBRATE!
SO LET'S, MY FRIEND. LET'S
PUT THE KIDDIES TO BED
AND RAISE SOME HELL.

WELL,
WOULD YOU
LIKE TO DO THE
HONORS?

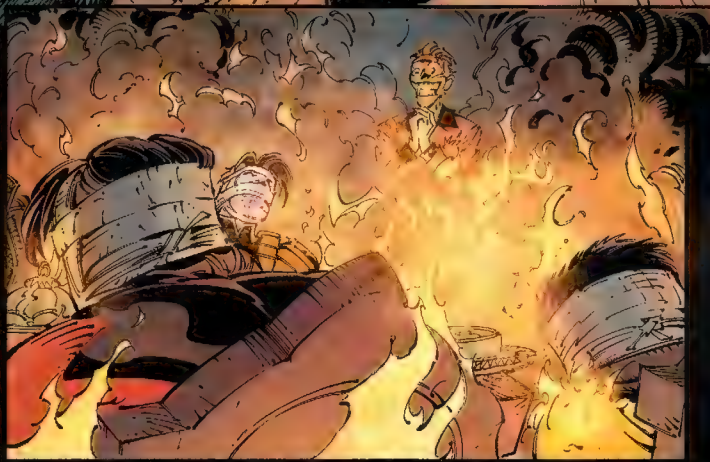
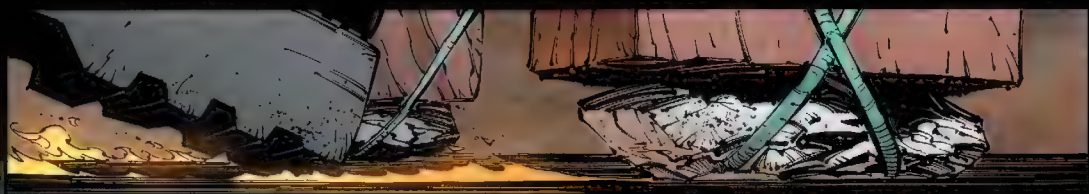


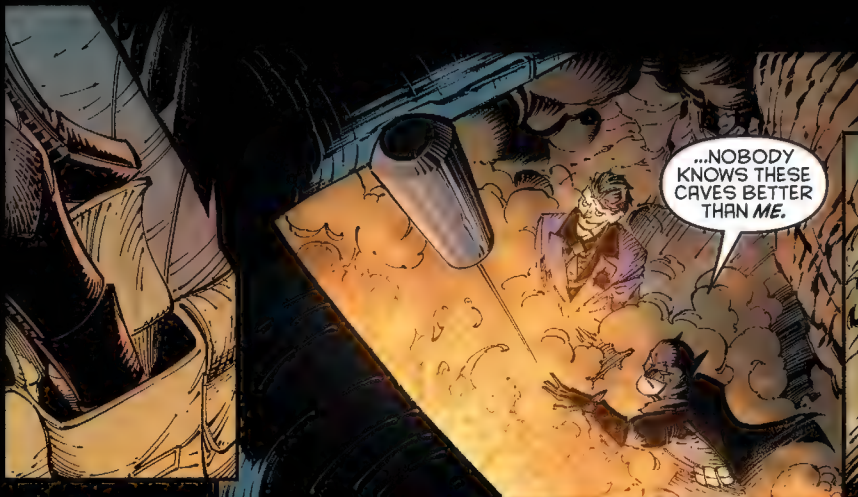
OR
SHALL
I?



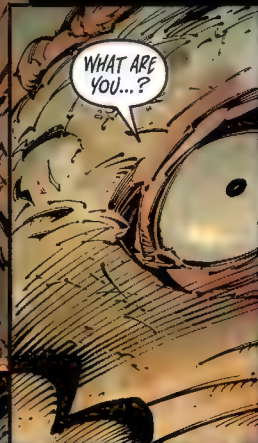
...GO ON.
OR I WILL.
I KNOW YOU
WANT TO...







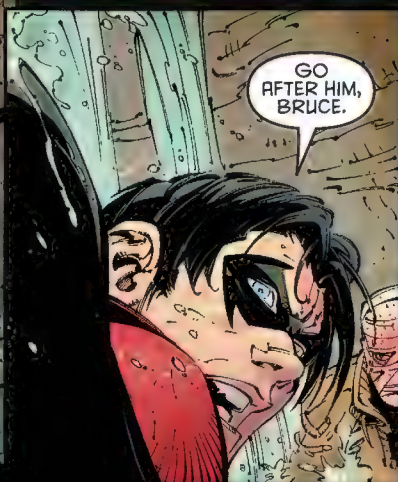
...NOBODY KNOWS THESE CAVES BETTER THAN ME.

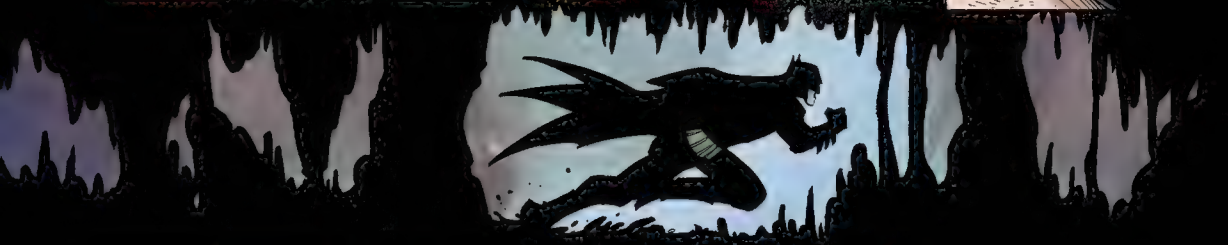


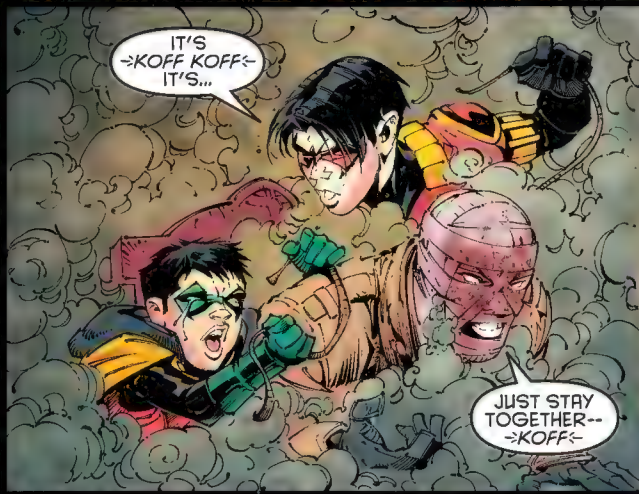
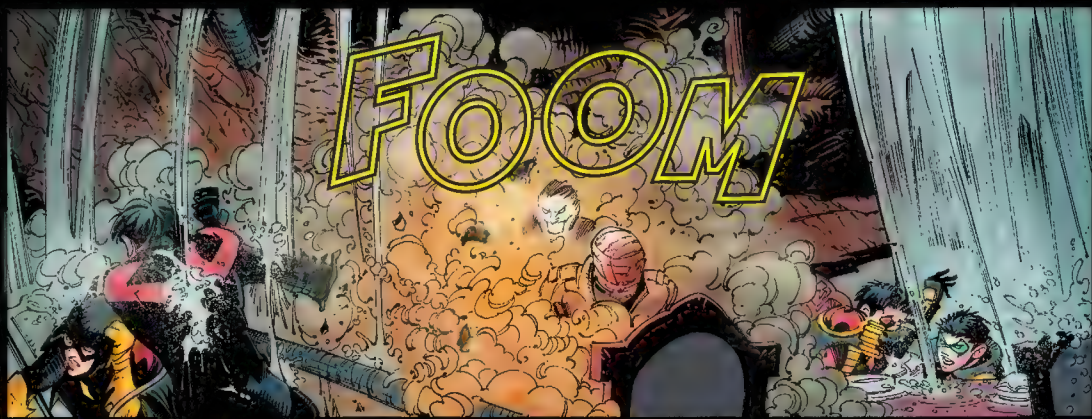
WHAT ARE YOU...?

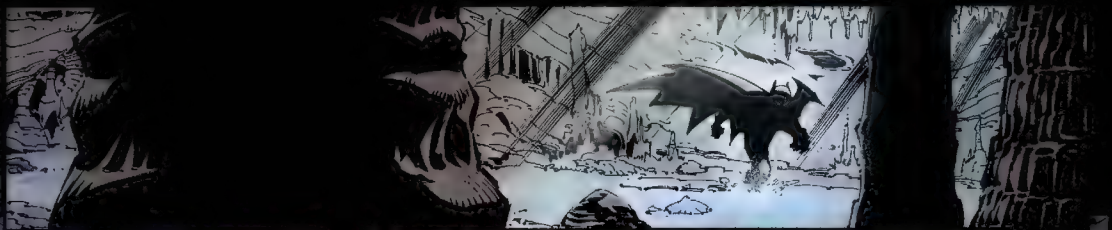


THAT'S NOT... FUNNY.

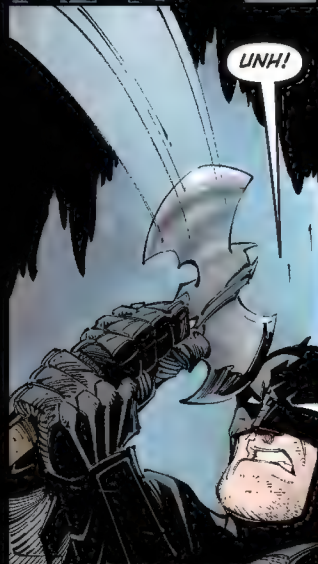








YAHNNNN!



UNH!



YOU
HAD TO GO
AND RUIN THE
MOOD, DIDN'T
YOU?



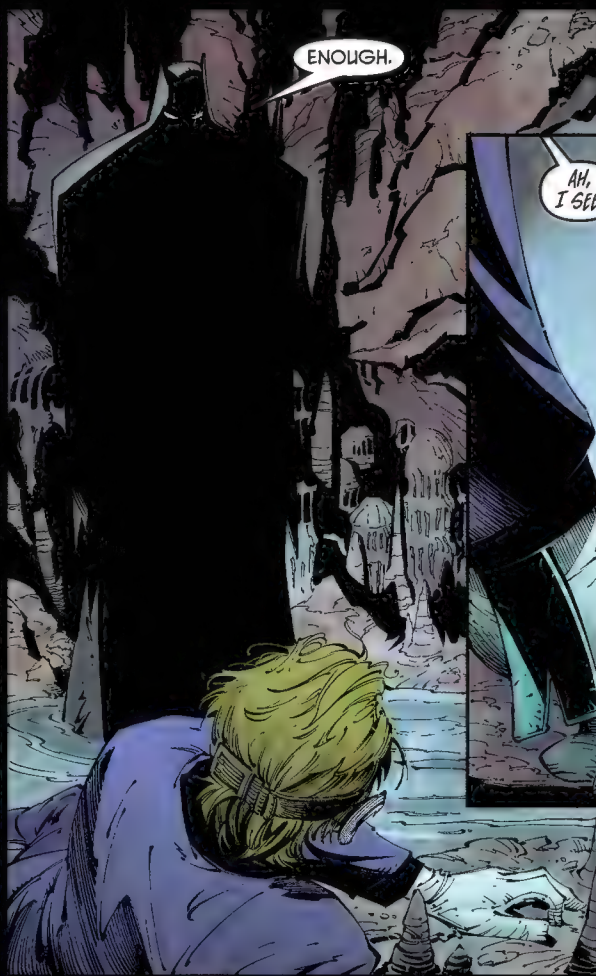
BLOWING OUT
THE CANDLES, KILLING
THE AMBIANCE!

WELL, AT LEAST YOU
FOLLOWED ME OUTSIDE
TO CONSOLE ME, PICK MY
CORSAGE OFF THE GROUND
AND TALK ME BACK
INTO YOUR ARM--

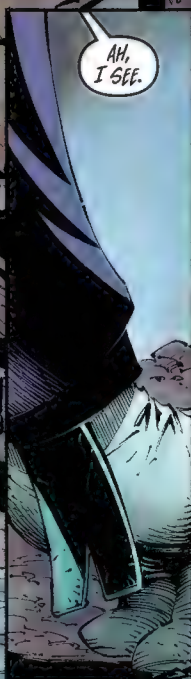
SHUT
UP



NO
MORE
TALK.



ENOUGH.



AH,
I SEE.



A DANCE,
THEN!



NO MORE
DANCES.



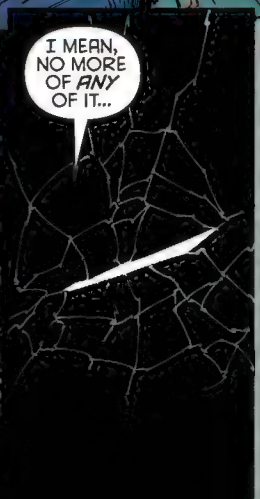
SKOFFE
HEH HEH...
THEN JUST THE
QUARREL.



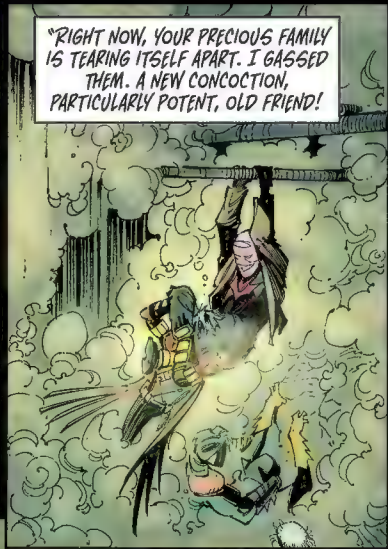
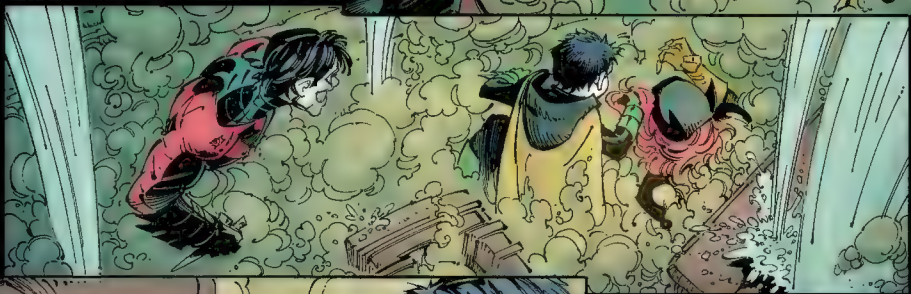
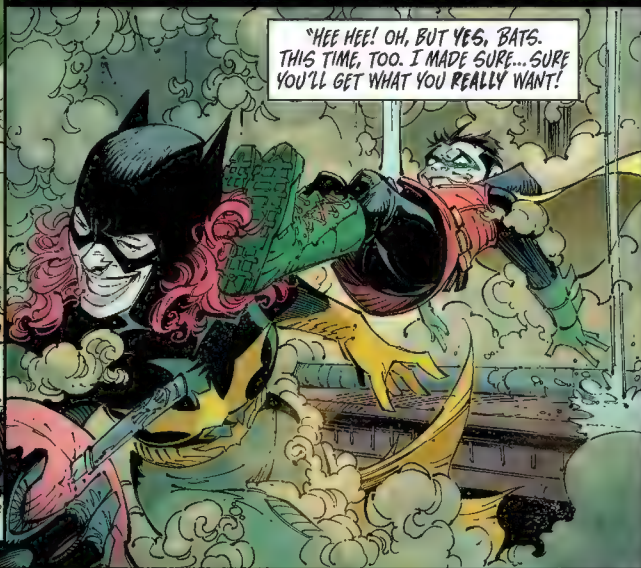
NO MORE
QUARRELING...



WHAT... WHAT
DO YOU MEAN?
HEH.



I MEAN,
NO MORE
OF ANY
OF IT...





...NOTHING
BUT SCRAPS FOR
PENNYWORTH TO--
AAGH!

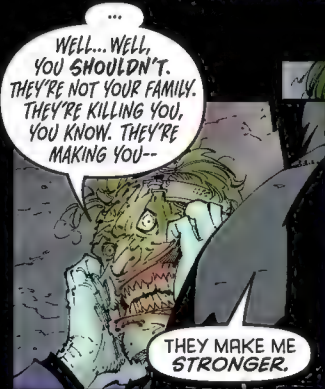


OW!



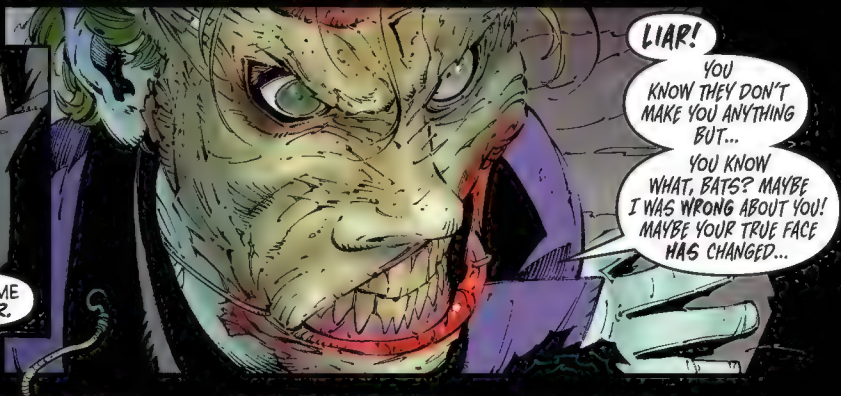
≠KOFF≠ RIGHT,
BATSSS, RIGHT.
YOU'RE REALLY JUST
GOING TO LET THEM
DIE, HAHAAH! SURE
YOU ARE!

NO. BUT
I HAVE FAITH
IN THEM.



...
WELL... WELL,
YOU SHOULDN'T.
THEY'RE NOT YOUR FAMILY.
THEY'RE KILLING YOU,
YOU KNOW. THEY'RE
MAKING YOU--

THEY MAKE ME
STRONGER.



LIAR!

YOU
KNOW THEY DON'T
MAKE YOU ANYTHING
BUT...

YOU KNOW
WHAT, BATS? MAYBE
I WAS WRONG ABOUT YOU!
MAYBE YOUR TRUE FACE
HAS CHANGED...



...LET'S
SEE!



HABA
HABA...



...HAHAHA--
AGH!



NOT THAT WAY,
JOKER. NOT BY
ACCIDENT...

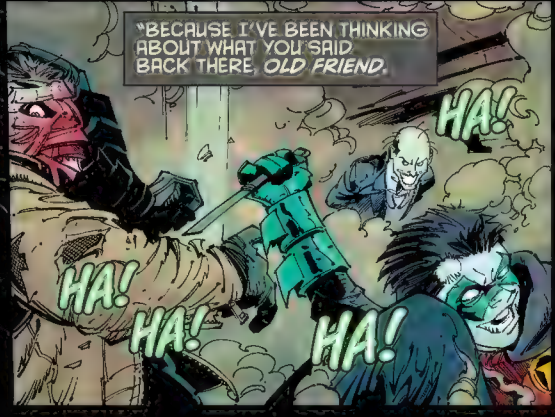


...EVERYTHING THAT
HAPPENS TO YOU
TONIGHT HAPPENS
BY MY HAND.

HA! HA!

HA!

HA!



"BECAUSE I'VE BEEN THINKING
ABOUT WHAT YOU SAID
BACK THERE, OLD FRIEND.

HA!

HA!

HA!

HA!



"ABOUT WHY I DON'T
JUST DO IT, FINALLY..."

HAHAHAHA...
NONONO...
HAHAHAHA



...SO HOW ABOUT IT, JOKER? HOW ABOUT TONIGHT I GO **FARTHER** WITH YOU THAN I'VE EVER GONE?

HOW ABOUT TONIGHT, I **STOP** THE GAME ONCE AND FOR ALL?



YOU LOVE IT! DENY IT ALL YOU WANT, YOU LOVE ME LIKE YOU LOVE--

I DID IT, JOKER.



"I BROKE THE SPELL."



I DID WHAT YOU WOULDN'T DO. RIGHT HERE IS WHERE YOU TURNED BACK, ISN'T IT? RIGHT AT THIS DROP, WHERE THE BOAT DIVES.

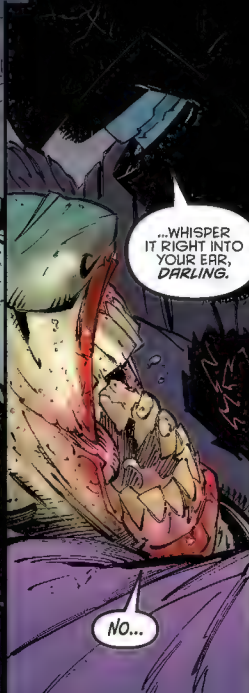
NOT BECAUSE YOU COULDN'T HOLD ON, BUT BECAUSE YOU WOULDN'T **WANT** TO KNOW. BUT SEE, ME, I'M NOT LIKE YOU...NOT ANYMORE, JOKER.

AND THIS YEAR, WHILE YOU WERE AWAY, I FINALLY DEDUCED IT. WHO YOU WERE **BEFORE**.



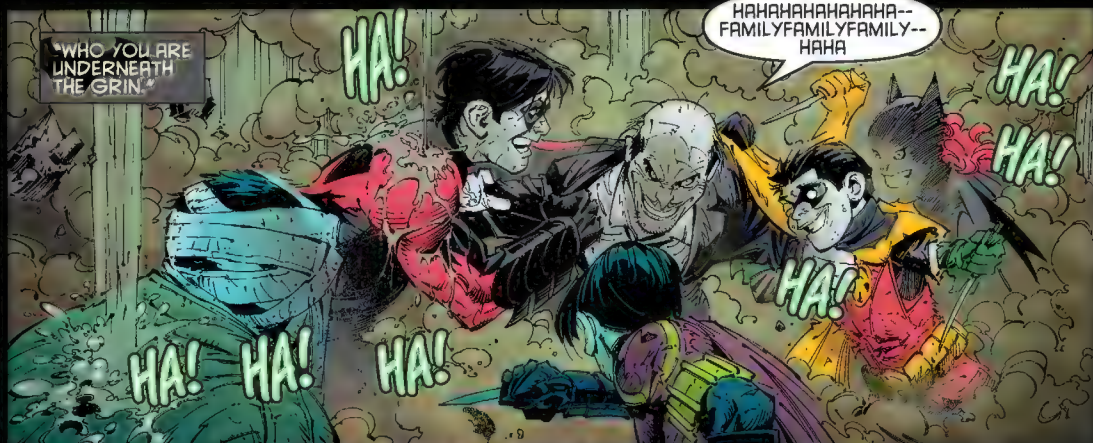
YOU'RE LYING! YOU'RE PLAYING MY OWN JOKE--

YOUR NAME. YOUR HISTORY. YOUR FAMILY. **ALL** OF IT. HERE. I'LL WHISPER IT TO YOU...



...WHISPER IT RIGHT INTO YOUR EAR, **DARLING**.

No...



"WHO YOU ARE UNDERNEATH THE GRIN."

HAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA--
FAMILYFAMILYFAMILY--
HAAAA

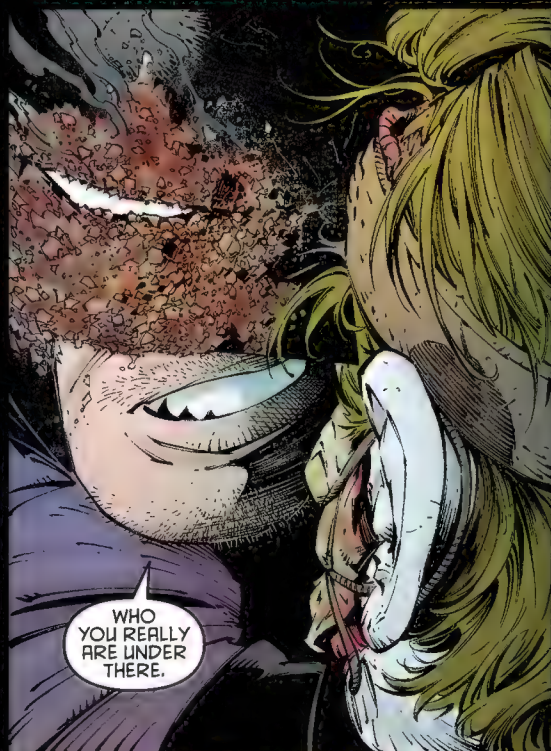
HA!

HA!
HA!

HA! HA!

HA!

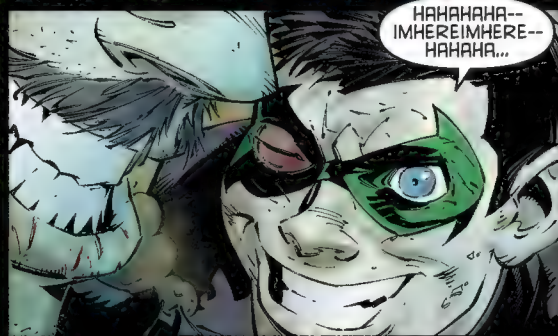
HA!



WHO
YOU REALLY
ARE UNDER
THERE.



HAAAA--
STOPSTOPSTOP--
HAAAAAAAA

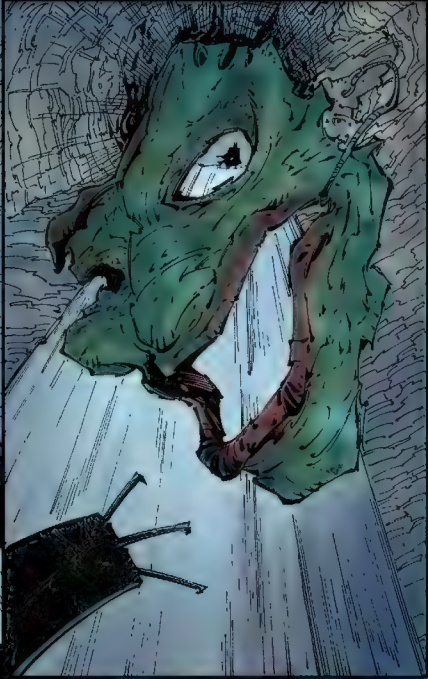
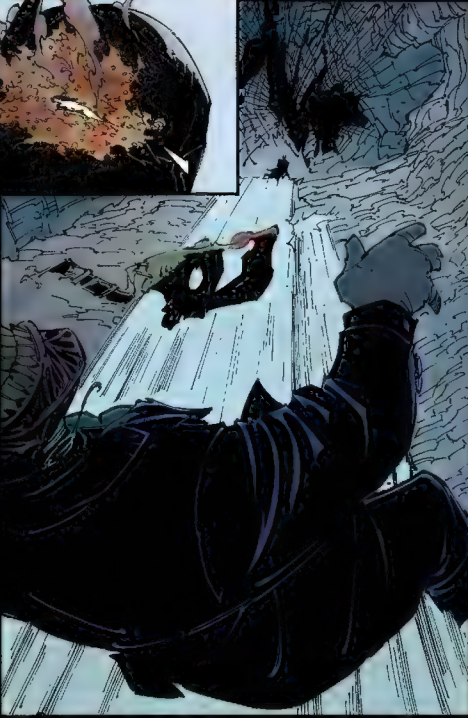
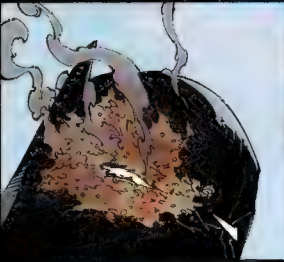


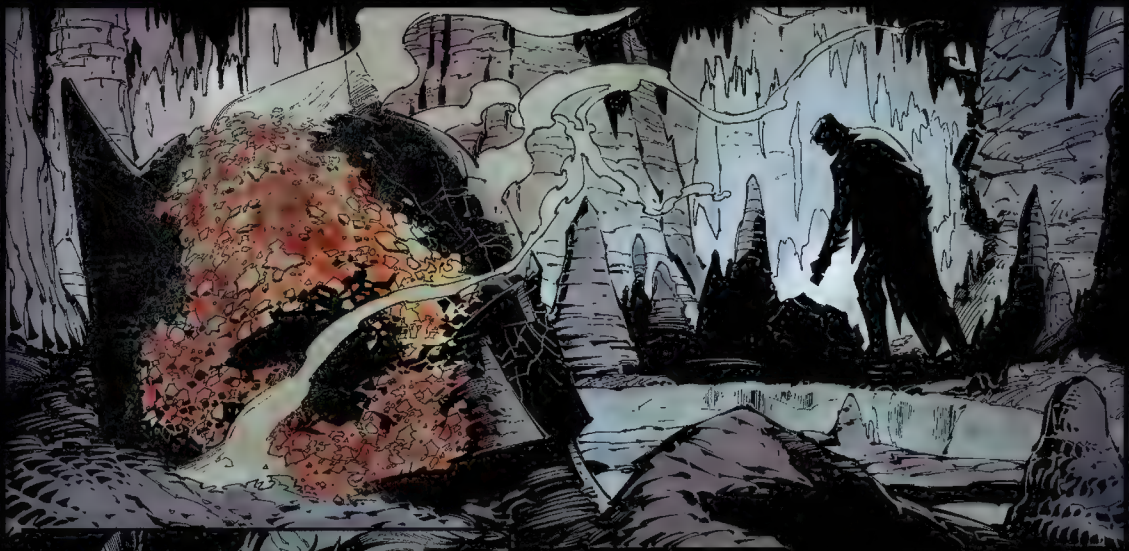
HAAAAAAAA--
IMHEREIMHERE--
HAAAAA...

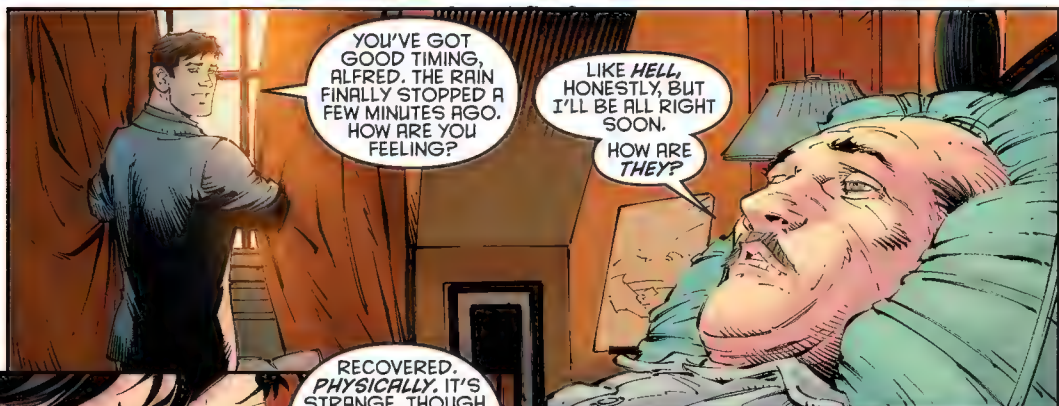
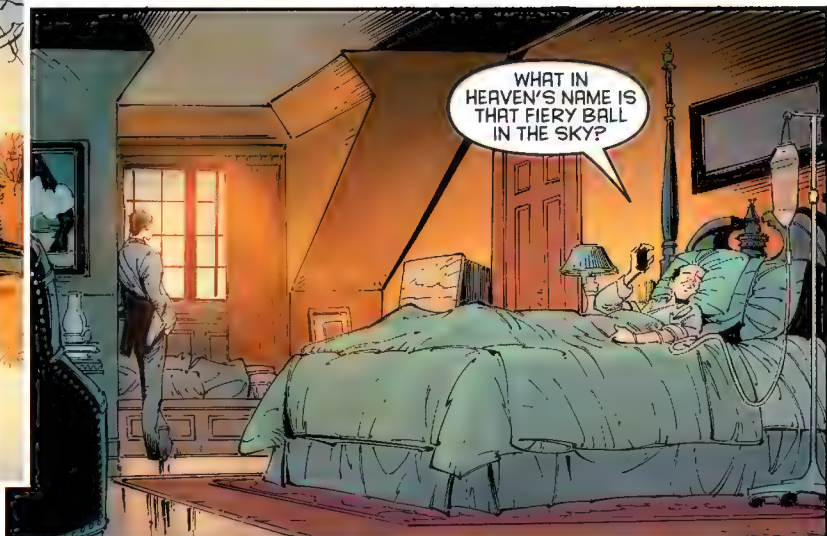


STOP IT!
I'M NOT
LISTENING!

YOUR
NAME, JOKER--
YOUR REAL
NAME IS...







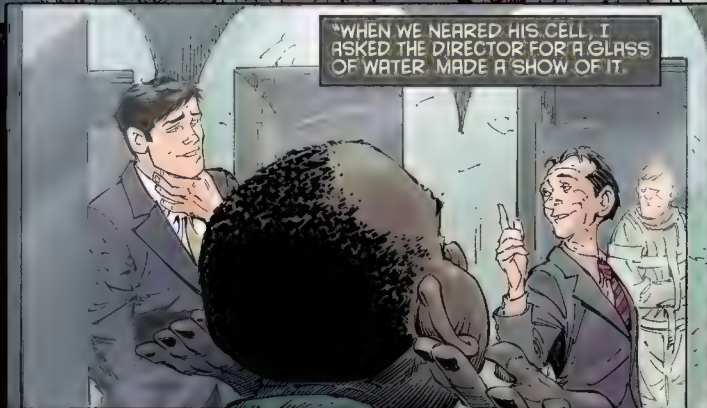
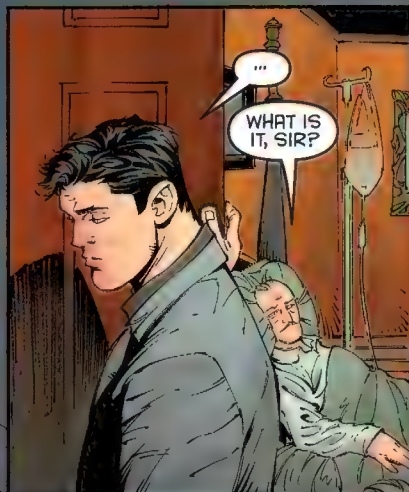
RECOVERED. **PHYSICALLY**. IT'S STRANGE, THOUGH, THERE'S A TRACE OF RADIOACTIVE ISOTOPIC MATERIAL IN THE TOXIN HE USED ON YOU AND THE REST OF THE FAMILY.


THE COMPUTER IS STILL WORKING TO IDENTIFY IT. JUST A MINUSCULE AMOUNT, NOTHING HARMFUL, BUT STILL.

I ACTUALLY INVITED THEM OVER TO TALK. THEY SHOULD BE HERE SOON.

AND YOU, MASTER BRUCE? HOW ARE YOU?







I FOUND
THIS. I THINK
IT BELONGS
TO YOU.



HE LOOKED RIGHT
AT THE CARD, ALFRED,
AND RIGHT AT ME.



...BUT...BUT HE DIDN'T
SEE ME. HE DIDN'T
SEE ME AT ALL.



IT WAS THEN
THAT I KNEW—

—KNEW THAT HE DIDN'T CARE
WHO I WAS BENEATH THE MASK, AND
NEVER WOULD. KNEW THAT HE WAS
INCAPABLE OF EVEN BROACHING
THE SUBJECT OF BRUCE WAYNE.
IT WOULD RUIN HIS FUN.



SO I KNEW THERE WAS NO CHANCE HE GOT INTO THE CAVE. I KNEW IT BECAUSE I *KNOW* HIM. KNOW HIM BETTER THAN I LIKE TO ADMIT. BUT THERE WAS NO WAY TO SAY THAT TO THEM, THE FAMILY. TO EXPLAIN IT...

...BUT WHAT HE SAID DOWN THERE, ALFRED, ABOUT WHY I REFUSE TO KILL HIM...?

IT'S TRUE I DON'T DO IT BECAUSE OF MY CODE, BECAUSE OF WHAT I *STAND* FOR. BUT THERE'S ANOTHER REASON, TOO...

AND IT'S THAT THIS CITY... I TRULY BELIEVE THAT IF I DID IT, IF I *KILLED JOKER*, GOTHAM WOULD JUST SEND ME SOMEONE *WORSE*. MAYBE EVEN SEND *HIM* BACK, BUT WORSE THAN BEFORE. I KNOW HOW IT SOUNDS, BUT--

HE'S GONE, NOW, SIR. IT'S OVER.

YES.
I'LL RING YOU WHEN THE FAMILY ARRIVES. THAT'S *TIM* TEXTING NOW.

Tim:
Bruce. Something came up. Sorry, I won't be able to make it today.

HE... CAN'T MAKE IT. THERE'S SOMETHING FROM *BARBARA*, TOO.

Barbara:
BRUCE. Dad asked me to help him out with some thing out of town.

"STILL NO WORD FROM *JASON*."

"THAT STILL LEAVES MASTER DAMIAN AND -KOFF KOFF-"

"JUST REST, ALFRED. I'LL BE BACK SOON."

Father, decided to train at the bunker downtown. Don't wait up.

DICK?

BRUCE. I'M JUST CALLING TO--

IT'S ALL RIGHT, I UNDERSTAND.

BZZT
BZZT

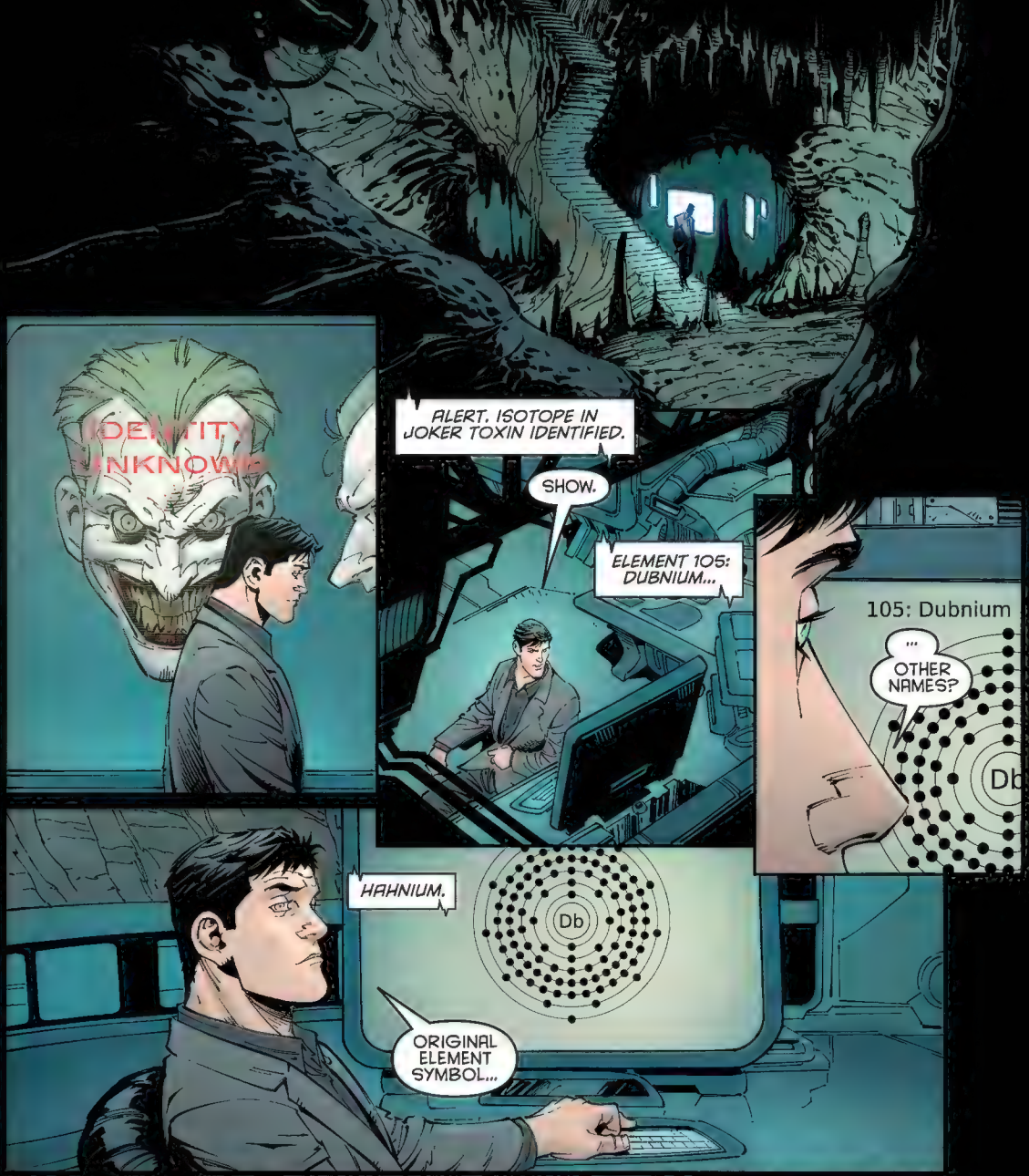
DICK...WHAT DID HE SAY TO YOU IN THE DARK?

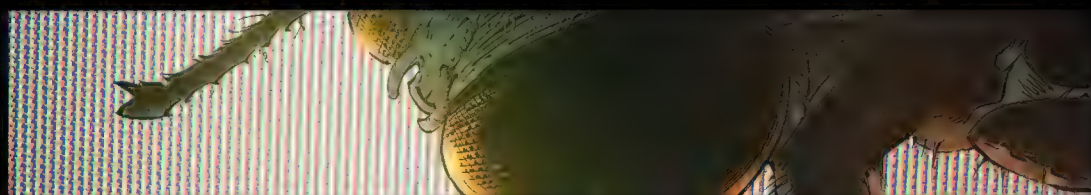
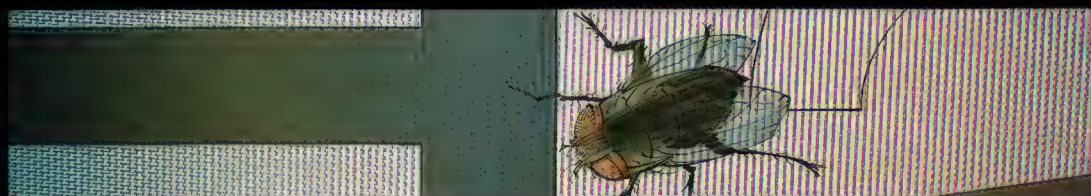
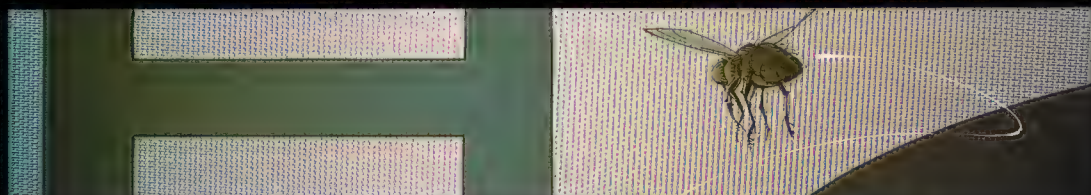
IT... IT DOESN'T MATTER.

LISTEN, I'M SORRY I--

I KNOW YOU ARE.

I'LL SEE YOU AROUND, BRUCE.







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SIMONE

ED
BENES

DANIEL
SAMPERE

VICENTE
CIFUENTES

DEATH OF THE FAMILY

BATGIRL

THE NEW 52!



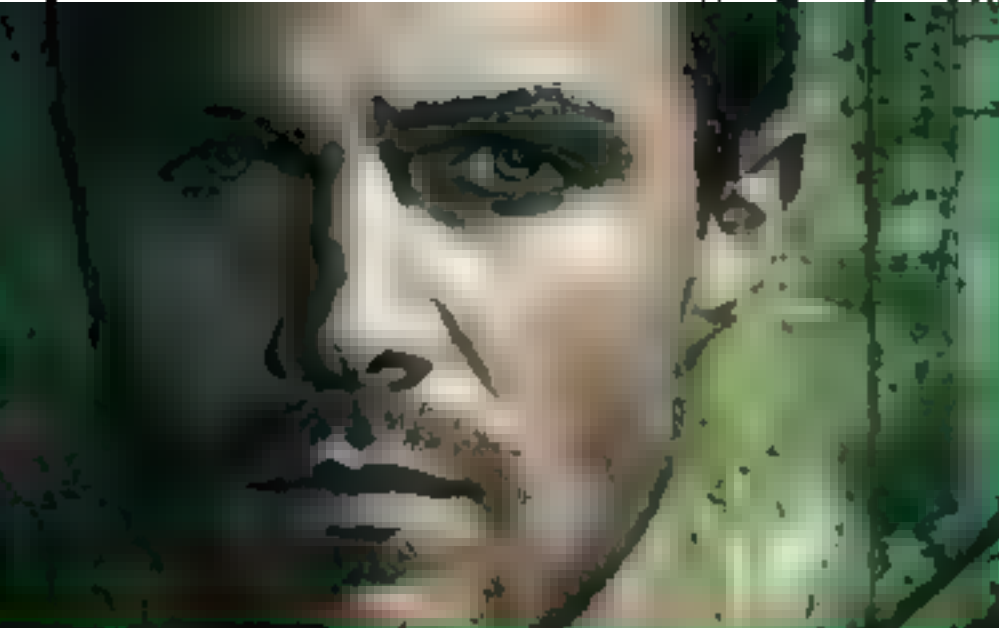
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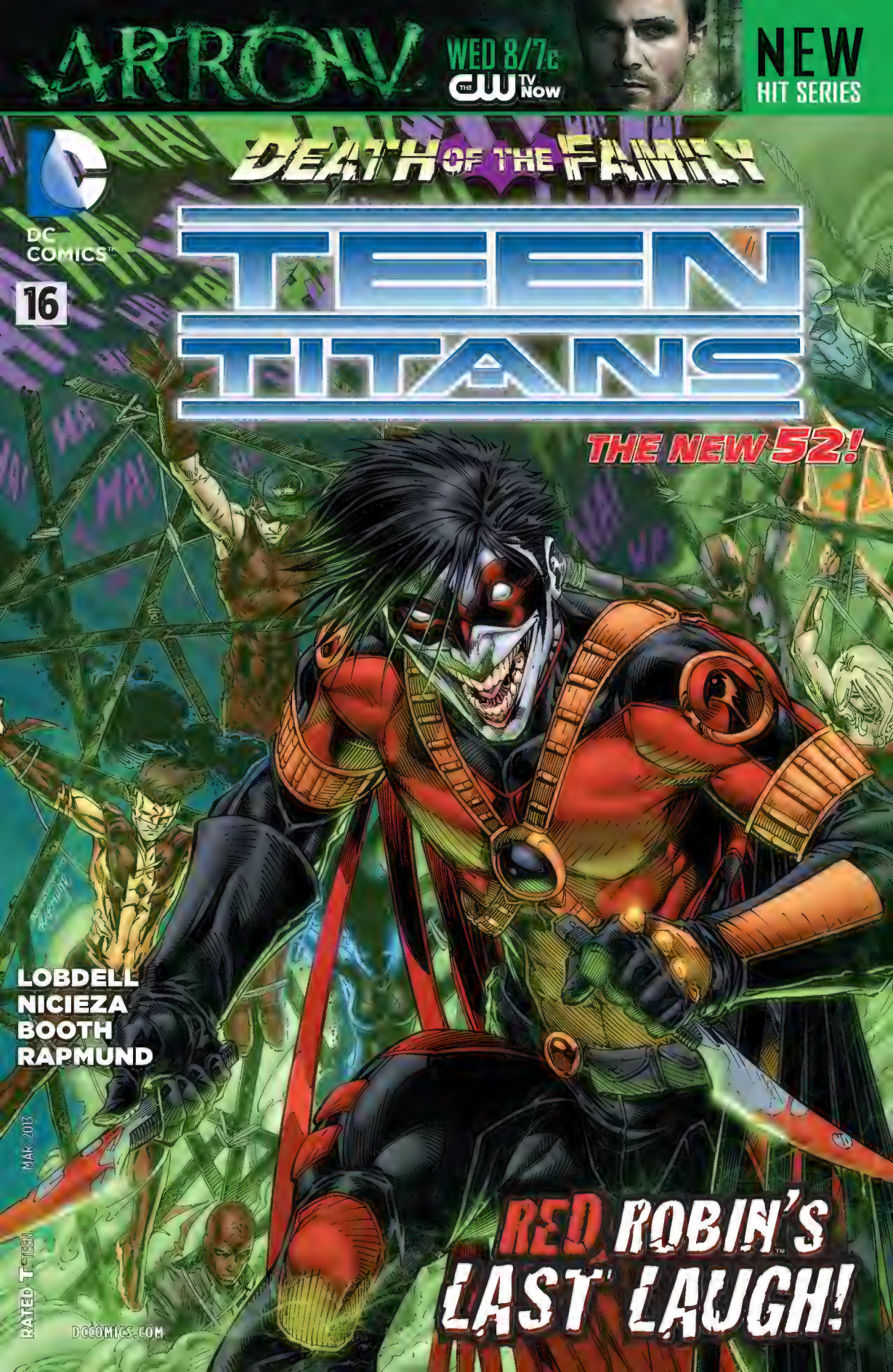
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LAST LAUGH!



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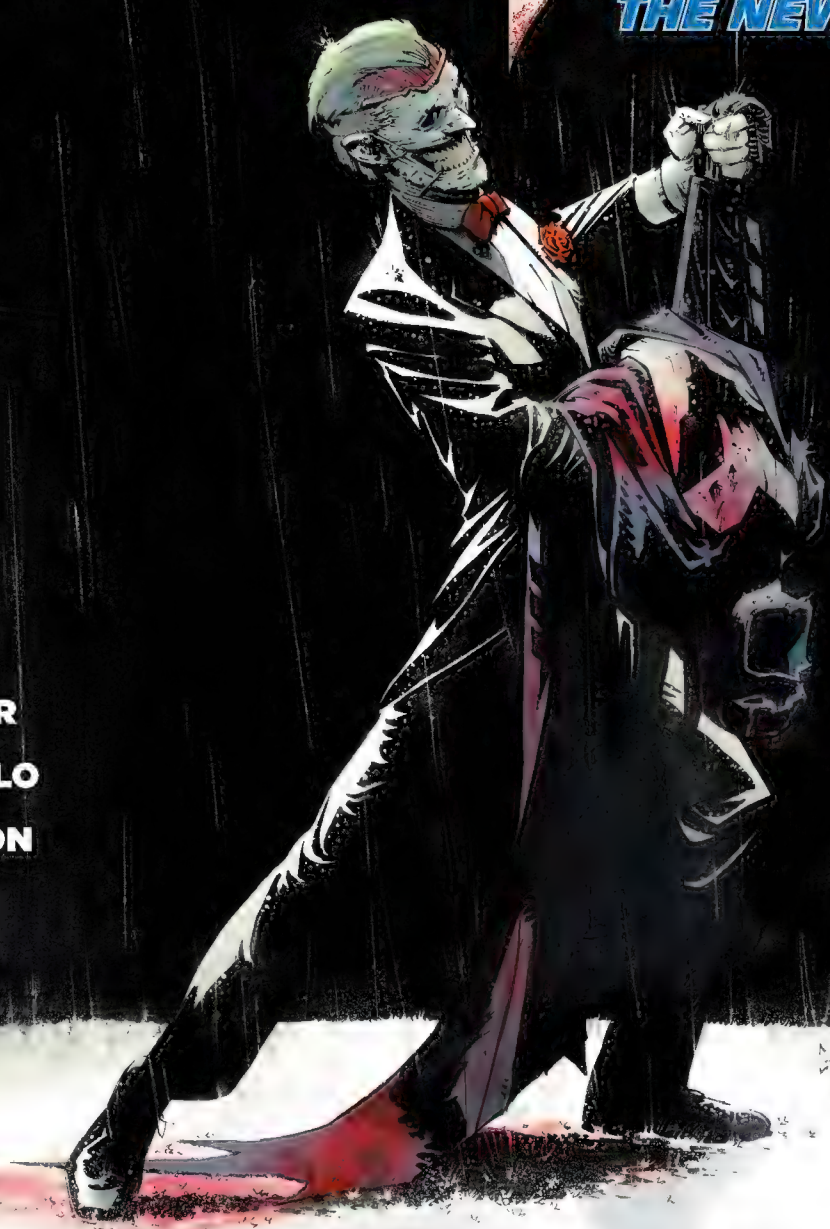
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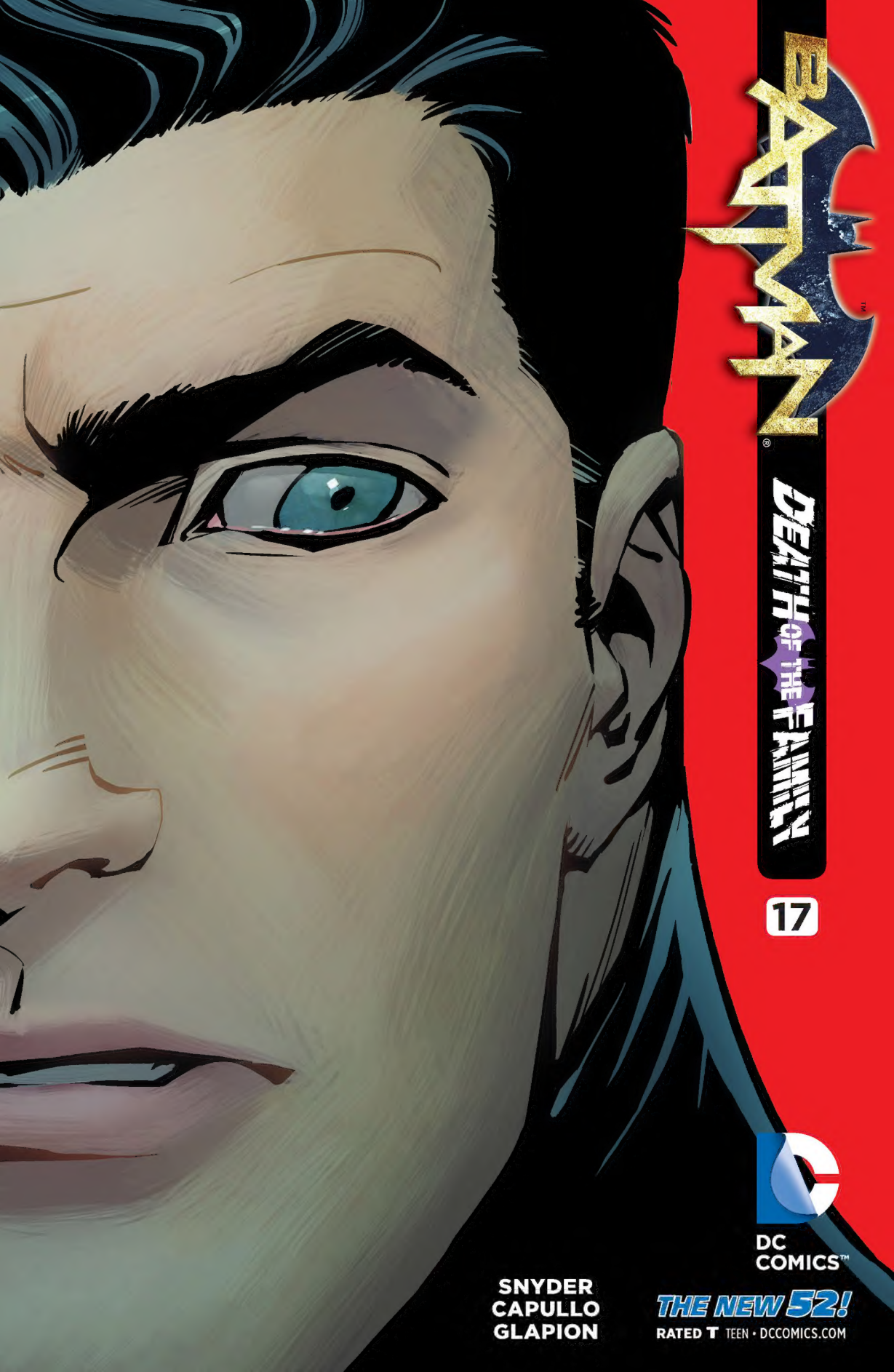


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